

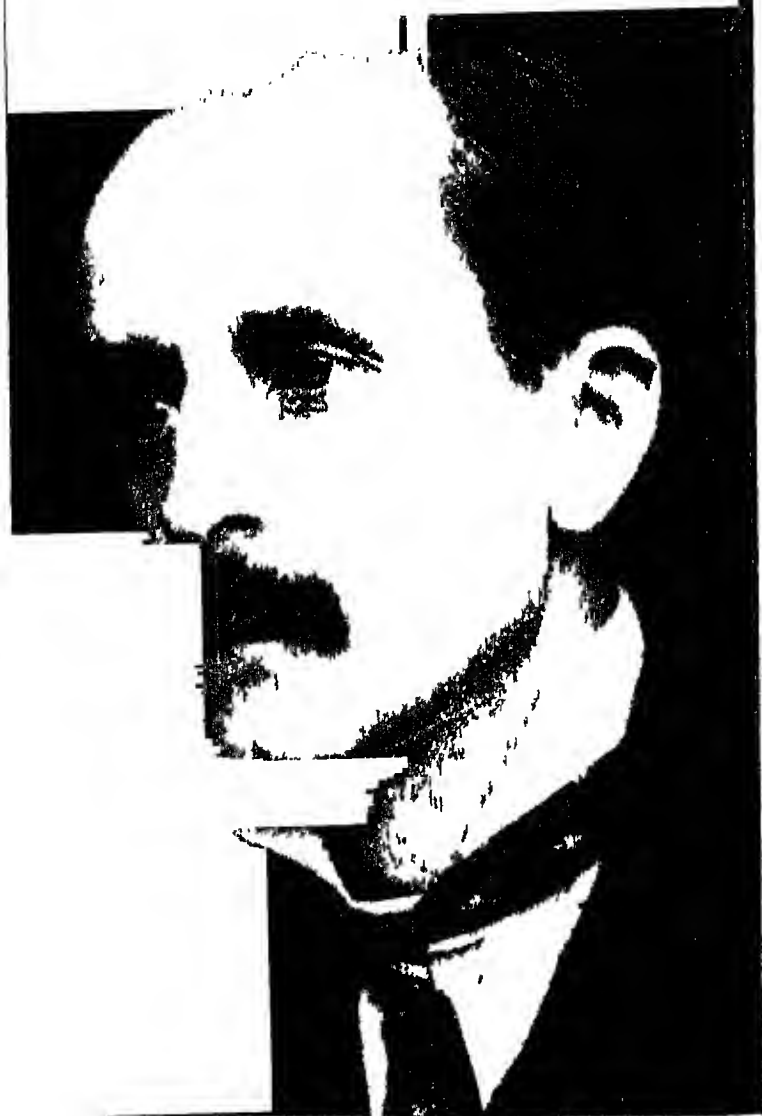






THE STORY OF J.M.B.  
(SIR JAMES BARRIE, BART., O.M.)





J M BARRIE  
in the early 1900's

(from a photograph by G. C. Beresford)

# THE STORY OF J.M.B.

a biography

by

DENIS MACKAIL

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THE STORY OF J.M.B.  
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THIS is what some of us will always remember.

Evening in the low, large, square room—brown and book-lined—on the top floor of the building at the river end of Robert Street, Adelphi. Actually this flat, which our host has occupied since he moved up, after seven and a half years there, from the floor below, was never known or planned by the brothers Adam. The roof of the original attic has been raised, and, as is obvious if you look up to it from outside, the whole flat is perched above and behind the original parapet. Its outer walls, though not its windows, slope slightly inwards, and though the bookshelves disguise this in the room where we are sitting, in the dining-room, beyond the little oblong hall, there is quite a suggestion that we are on board a ship. A ship, it is true, becalmed now among London chimney-pots; but a ship whose captain has voyaged far enough in his day.

Perhaps he has just given us dinner there. Perhaps, in the course of this meal, Robb, the canary, has come out of his cage beyond the door and has touched and entertained us by taking a ride on one of the dishes from the sideboard. But Robb mustn't stay up late. At a word from his master he retires once more. We're back in the big study, or sitting-room, or whatever it is called, again. There is no doubt that we are wondering, however often we may have been privileged guests up here, what sort of an evening it is going to be now.

The gongs from the trams on the Embankment, far below, ring irregularly and a little sadly. The murmur of the traffic—though it is no more at this distance—never stills. There is no need to draw the curtains at this height, and lights from other windows, from trains, signals and illuminated advertisements, form a constant, flickering background. Adelphi Terrace is still standing, in this scene; quiet and dignified in spite of the cars which have been parked along its railings by playgoers. If we look out from the other corner, behind the host's big desk, we can see—thanks to the curve of the river—the clock-tower of the Houses of Parliament.

The room, which was once Joseph Pennell's studio, has two fire-

places. One, surrounded by Dutch tiles, contains the broadest gas-fire these eyes have ever seen; while to the right of it, in yet another window, is the little desk where C. Greene—who can't type, but is no ordinary secretary to no ordinary employer—has been doing her work to-day. The other or main fireplace is not only a fireplace, but a cave.

Beware, if you are even a six-footer, of stepping into it without ducking your head, or there will be little that you remember after that. Its floor and walls are of dark-red brick. The fire itself is a wood-fire, burning on a vast heap of silvery ash. Its bellows and a steel prong for jabbing at the logs (a store of which is kept on the landing outside the front door) are both on the heroic scale. On one side, still within the cave, there is a high-backed settle, which it would be inaccurate to describe as comfortable. On the other there is a short but considerably less Spartan settee.

What is the host doing? It seems that he has finished his after-dinner cigar, and has gone straight, and inevitably, to the tin of tobacco—John Cotton, it has been now, for many years—and one of his enormous bull-dog pipes. Many years ago, also, he gave me one of these, and I still know where I could get another if the need arose. But though I smoke pipes—and though Heaven knows I wanted to smoke that one—its capacity, its calibre, and above all the leverage which it exerted on the jaw, proved only too well what I should certainly have known already. That it was the gift of no ordinary smoker.

And of a smoker to-night with, alas, no ordinary cough. It comes on him again now as he stands there clasping the great bowl, racking him and choking him. Filling us also with sympathy and alarm. But nobody alludes to it. It is painful and pitiful, but we know, somehow, that it is better to let our eyes wander round the room again than attempt to go to his aid. For though the cough is an old enemy, it is also, in another sense, a very old friend.

You can't say the room isn't interesting. No chance to examine the books now, but almost every bit of furniture has its history or association. The photographs, dotted here and there, are familiar yet fascinating too. Other objects rouse memories which have been revealed. Others, again, are still mysterious and likely to remain so. Our host has had hundreds of friends, and among them there has been far more than the normal proportion of sorrow and tragedy. It would almost certainly be a mistake to try and make

conversation—though this may be very necessary later on—by asking what some of the mysterious mementos represent.

There is another and less objective aspect. Up that lift shaft outside there have come, during the years that he has been here, more distinguished men and women than could easily be numbered. They have stepped out on to the little landing with the heap of fire-logs, have rung the bell and been admitted. They have sat in this room, as we are sitting now. They have felt and contributed to its atmosphere. Hundreds of them, and nearly all proud to have crossed the threshold. It wouldn't be exactly fair to say that our host has ever tried to collect them. It would be fairer to say that his position has been such that most of them were more than glad to come. Yet it would also be perfectly fair to say that part of him—and later, perhaps, we may realise how many parts there were—was by no means dissatisfied that this position had been attained.

Well, fame may or may not be a glittering bauble, and men may or may not be born equal. But they don't, in their own or each other's view, remain equal, and this room has certainly seen some pretty great ones in its time. It can't say so, of course, but we should be very insensitive if at some of these odd moments we didn't feel that it has memories, too.

The paroxysm is over. Our host, looking faintly surprised and, as almost always nowadays, sad and weary beyond belief, hasn't only filled the pipe but is recklessly lighting it. Is he going to walk or sit? He starts walking. If he carried a pedometer, and even if it had always been removed whenever he went out of doors, it would be impossible to imagine the mileage that it must now register from that endless to-and-fro. Watch him as he turns and comes back again. There is a slight, nautical roll, so that for the second time this evening we are reminded of a sea-captain; though perhaps we should be careful of such comparisons and hasten to add that there is no further resemblance at all. Yet there it is, and there it has always been. Again he turns with a swing, and sets off again across his invisible quarter-deck. Of course, if this is going to be one of the evenings when he walks but never talks . . .

No, don't let's remember that. Such evenings—and such afternoons and mornings—there have undoubtedly been. We know them all too well. We know the faint, Caledonian grunt with which our desperate observations are received—a sound corresponding to the hollow plop when a stone is dropped into a deep well—and the



expression, which is horribly like a sneer, though he doesn't know it or mean it, as he goes on marching again. Oh, yes, we have suffered, and some of us have said to ourselves that we won't stand it, even as an extraordinary feeling of pity grips us again at the same time. Some of us have gone away and burst out afterwards to other victims, have forgotten the extraordinary feeling of pity, and have hardened our hearts. But don't let's remember that.

Let it be rather that, while still walking, and still without removing the pipe, he begins to speak. An answer, perhaps, to not so desperate an observation, for to-night is to be a lucky evening after all. You remember his voice? Not exactly deep, but with a persistent, rumbling burr in it. A slightly singsong intonation in the longer sentences, but a scrupulous absence of emphasis for every climax. A sad voice, nearly always. An enunciation which we naturally assume to be Scotch, and which *is* Scotch, though somehow completely individual as well. He doesn't gesticulate, except occasionally with one or other of his eyebrows. The cough also interrupts him occasionally, yet so effectively sometimes that almost any actor might envy it. Well, if it comes to that, he is certainly giving one of his performances, for our benefit. We can be pretty sure that he is listening to it quite as carefully and appreciatively as we are.

Self-conscious? There has never been anyone so self-conscious, in the sense that still and always he is watching to see what he will do next. But not in the sense that he mistrusts himself. He doesn't, and there would be very little reason for it if he did. That famous shyness isn't, from our point of view, entirely a legend. The outward signs are there, often enough. Often enough it is part of the performance that he should pretend to play up to them. But underneath, inside, as J.M.B. still studies J.M.B.—by thunder there's no feeling of inferiority!

It's a cloak. We know it's a cloak. He doesn't want to be disturbed; that's all. He's busy with the strange companion whom he understands better than most of us, who always interests him, frequently fascinates him, and not infrequently scares him; whom he has forced to work for him. but whom he has never entirely learnt how to control.

To-night, however, perhaps he is only keeping half an eye on him. Here, fortunately with no need for encouragement (for no

one, either, has ever learnt how to encourage him), comes the first of the stories. We've heard it before? Very likely. It is even possible that we know how utterly untrue it is. That isn't the point. His version is almost unquestionably far better than the truth; riper, richer, funnier, or more sardonic. If another little improvement has crept into it since last time, we should certainly be base, ungrateful spoil-sports—quite apart from any affair of manners or pluck—if we let him see that we know this.

Of course we don't dream of it. Our hope is only that one story will lead to another, and if luck holds, it will. He has stopped walking—that's a good sign—he has come into the cave, still smoking, he has disposed himself on the settee—the one which isn't as uncomfortable as the settle, where for some reason we seem to have disposed ourselves—and with one foot tucked under him he continues to talk.

More stories. More memories. Yet beware of them, even more than of bumping your head. This little creature, with his sad face and in these days, alas, his slightly laboured breathing, is a man of genius. He has lived by mixing facts, as he sees them, with an imagination that can never leave them alone. Accuracy and sincerity are almost certainly qualities which he respects and admires—isn't he a graduate of Edinburgh University?—but the first is only a word to him when a story is at stake; the second is always at the mercy of his own gift for words. Somewhere, as we also sit watching him, there must, presumably, be an essential J.M.B.—even if it is but a mixture or balance between elements which have never combined. But if any biographer should swallow what he is being told this evening—or, if it comes to that, if he should swallow more than a fraction of speeches and writings which are professedly autobiographical—he may still find himself quite a remarkable distance from the truth. Better, for we are a guest to-night, to abandon all notion of critical analysis. Far better just to appreciate the stories as they come.

He is inclined to represent himself as at once more cunning and simpler than he really is; telling stories against himself, yet with a strong, unspoken implication that it was the other characters who came out worst. As more than likely they did. Does he boast sometimes? Undoubtedly. Fame and flattery, he would have you suppose, have wearied him, and perhaps this is true of some of their manifestations—which can possibly be irritating enough; but he

certainly doesn't trouble to pretend that he hasn't deserved them. So he's conceited, is he? We can't answer that one. Some people think so, and if he suspects this, it will be to them, in all probability, that he exhibits the clearest signs of conceit. For fun. Or to oblige them. Or again as another easy means of hiding what they can't see anyhow. The immense number of secret doors through which he is always slipping in his mind, even when he is apparently at his frankest or at his most like the rest of us.

On the other hand, of course, if anyone says that he isn't conceited—well, there you are again. One is almost bound to contradict such a statement. Then to remember this, that and the other proof and counter-proof. Finally to wish to goodness that such an extraordinarily irrelevant question had never been raised. "Oh, the cleverness of me!" says Peter in *Peter Pan*, and some of us have seemed to hear another voice speaking at the same time. Yet we should be wary of that resemblance or reminder, too. If our host had ever used such words himself, there would always have been a glimmer or inflexion of self-mockery. For even if Peter is puzzled by his own character sometimes, it is a far, far simpler one than that of the man who created him.

It mustn't be thought, either, that our lucky evening is nothing but a monologue. Admittedly we have time, during some of the stories, to speculate on the amazingly impressive contours of our host's head, which sometimes it seems that he can hardly support, so full is it of dreams and memories; and then again which makes a sudden, apposite and effective movement for the very special benefit of the story and ourselves. Time also, in some cases, to look back, as it were; to see it when it was younger and not always so sad; to remember it when it was apparently even more out of proportion to the body on the settee; to recall its devastating and catastrophic headaches; to return to personal memories, perhaps as far away as the house in Gloucester Road.

Further for a few of us still; but of course the composite guest is listening too. And as it isn't to be all stories to-night—though undoubtedly they will recur—there must now be conversation as well. Talk about friends. Sometimes his face lights up, and if we were the friend who had brought that gleam into it, we should be proud indeed. For he knows how to praise.

And how to damn. Yes, it must be admitted again that friends can fall out of favour. A name is mentioned that had been better

withheld. His head rolls round. One eyebrow lifts warningly. The Caledonian grunt; and that's that.

Or short of this he can take an acquaintance, put him on a pin, twirl him before you, and leave him with less dignity at this moment than one whose clothes have been stolen while bathing. Blind, raging prejudice seems sometimes to actuate him in this mood, though of course the more he exaggerates, the less he can manage to retain any real bitterness. Another thing that you must never believe is that he isn't deeply attached to some of these butts. While if there is anything about them that he can imitate or parody, he almost loves them.

Other names are sacred, and can never be ridiculed, whatever the mood. These are the giants of literature mostly, a list leading up to one with whom he only exchanged gifts and letters, and two whom he knew and treated as gods. R.L.S., George Meredith, Thomas Hardy.

And Charles Frohman, to whom he was a god in turn. And some of the actresses who have played his parts. You'd better not look as if you could say anything against these. Actors, on the other hand—always with the glorious and tremendous exception of Henry Irving—seem to be fair game. More prejudice here, perhaps—just consider what he and the actors have done for each other—but in his heart he doesn't really feel that's the way for a man to spend his life. The thought of it, apart from the one exception, has always made him a little uncomfortable and uneasy.

Authors bring us, not unnaturally, to books, and here there might be another surprise if we weren't by this time prepared for it. Our host is over seventy. Well over seventy. But he still reads what the young ones are writing, and wherever there is any spark of merit in it, he is on to that too. No patronage or condescension. No reluctance to give praise again where it is due. No suggestion, though he can be critical enough when they are careless or provocatively coarse, that the literary world is going to the dogs. He will have written to some of them, as a brother and hardly even as an elder brother, and some of them will come up here to visit him. Not as the President of the Incorporated Society of Authors, but as a colleague who knows that every working artist works the better for sympathy and encouragement. That doesn't sound very much like a septuagenarian, does it?

What a posterously incongruous word for him. He was old

when he was young, like a changeling with centuries of secret experience. But now that he is old, it is only a physical age. Because he is tired he has to spare himself, and do many of the things that old men do. But while any strength is left to him, his mind still darts about where no one can hope to follow it. Still pauses only, as it were, to call out to the rest of us to hurry up.

Now, perhaps, the conversation has drifted to more general topics. More prejudice here, true or assumed. There are a lot of things that he doesn't like, or tries not to accept. Facets of the real world which have offended him; though if he wants to play at being grown-up and responsible, no one, for the time being, can do it better. Beware once more, though. He is only playing, or else, safe out of reach, he has let one of his lesser selves loose to see how it will fare in this rôle. The conversation is illuminating but extraordinarily misleading. He can be querulous and fantastically unreasonable at this stage, but it is no use trying to soothe him. Nor, however strong the impulse, can we possibly interrupt to tell him that we love him even when he is doing his utmost to provoke us. We just listen and look. "You little wonder!" we think, proudly. But of course it would be maddening for him if we were rash enough to answer his complaints like that.

So perhaps they work themselves out, or the lesser self is recalled. He's calmer again. He's lighting yet another pipe. Some of his attitudes on the settee are still very nearly those of a contortionist, but they always have been, and one supposes they always will. Or not? No, no; he's so frail, so tired, he has suffered so much, and he is over seventy, but we mustn't think of his leaving us. We can't. We won't.

But we do.

It is impossible not to. He is like no one else on earth, but for all that it is bound to happen. It's coming nearer, and he knows it's coming nearer. In a minute or two, though he is still prepared to sit up to any hour you like, something is going to make us rise and take our departure. An old and not unjustifiable feeling that it is always better to bring anything to an end too soon than too late. It is also extremely unlikely that he will press us to stay on, and if he does this—for it isn't altogether unknown—there will only be two difficult decisions instead of one. A selfish thought, perhaps, but somehow we are on our legs.

"I think I ought to be getting back now."

A Caledonian sound of inquiry, but the decision—now violently regretted—seems to have been accepted. He is getting up too. We wish we could say something, anything, to show our gratitude for this lucky evening. We wish to goodness we weren't still wondering how many more of them there can possibly be. But, again, no one has ever produced a stronger feeling of inadequacy and paralysis when real emotion comes nearest the surface. It is one of the curses that has always accompanied the blessings. If we could suddenly sit down and write to each other now, he at least could express the whole thing—of which he is certainly aware—so exquisitely that—

Well, it might be too exquisite, you know. The letters that he has written to us, when the mood was on him, and when the best of a choice of phrases was just a little too good not to be used. He has probably forgotten them, and even at the time, though thrilled, we probably had just enough sense to remember his perilous gift with a pen. And, anyhow, of course this has got to be done by word of mouth.

So it can't be done at all. He comes out into the hall with us, and there is complete silence as we heave ourselves into our overcoat and take our hat from among the letters and presentation copies which have arrived since dinner. He returns from the little landing, where he has just been pressing the button for the electric lift. Round sweeps his right arm once more—that characteristic action like the delivery of an old-fashioned bowler—to meet and grasp our hand. There's the smile, too, whatever he may have written about losing it; almost as sweet and quite as indescribable as ever.

"Good-night."

"Good-night, J.M.B. And thank you——"

He doesn't look as if he wanted to be thankful at all. Paralysis again. The lift-cage has come up, and we are just going to step into it when he says one of the luckiest things of all.

"Come again. Soon. Just ring up."

"Oh, rather! Yes, I will Thank you——"

"Short notice, you know." No, we're certainly not going to try and reproduce his accent. "I never like any arrangements far ahead."

He smiles again, nods, and vanishes, as we close the grille and descend. That point about short notice has grown on him lately,

and we are afraid it isn't the only point that keeps some of his older friends away. For they are supposed to invite themselves, too, and some of them don't, or won't, or find it too difficult. I never realised, indeed, until after he was dead, how lonely he had often been up there towards the end, because something inside him had forced him to transfer all this kind of initiative to others. I had thought, and he had let me think, that they were still coming night after night—I knew that he went out pretty seldom now—and always believed him when the message came back that Tuesday, which I had suggested, would be no good. That I must come on Thursday.

Why? I don't know. Was this a sign of age after all, then? Or had he found a fresh way of tormenting himself?

There must be hundreds of questions like this, if I am now to try and tell the story of his life, and most of them, it had best be admitted at once, must remain unanswered. I knew him, I was deeply attached to him, and some of him I think I understood. I profited from him and put up with him—it's no use pretending that one was possible without the other. I am not, to use his own phrase, preparing to twist my finger in the socket, though if I did so, I should be the one who would be the smaller for it.

I want to do a most difficult thing, which is to tell you or remind you of the truth. For as long as there are famous men, books will be written about them and people will want to hear about them. And you know this much, J.M.B. You wanted to be famous; didn't you?

You had your wish, you earned it, and you paid for it. Perhaps there is another thing you know, which will help you to understand and forgive. That during all the years when you were my friend and more than my friend—including, inevitably, the times when you were making me pay for this, too—it never once occurred to me that I should be the one who would be asked to write this book.

If it had, the book might have been easier both to write and to read. As a biographer there is no question that I threw away more opportunities than come to most of them. Yet that's how it was between us. Perhaps, all the time, you were trusting me not to write it. Perhaps I am betraying that trust now.

But if ever a bit of work were hard enough, you certainly approved of that. Didn't you? And if ever there were a sort of twist or surprise in life—such as the task that has come to me so unex-

pectedly and alarmingly now—wasn't this always something that you appreciated and that pleased you, too?

That is my excuse or defence, which it seems somehow that I am forced to make. But undoubtedly there has also and already been more than enough about me. As I drop down that lift-shaft, I disappear from these pages for at least thirty-five years—if not, which would be better still, for good. Yet they have to be written; because, dear J.M.B., you know you were no ordinary man.

## 2

In 1860—the twenty-fourth year of Queen Victoria's reign, and the last complete year of her husband's life—these were some of the names and events in the national foreground.

Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister. Lord John Russell was Foreign Secretary. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Bright and Cobden were both members of the House of Commons.

Mainly owing to the rising cost of Defence—fifteen millions were voted for the Army this spring, and nearly as much again for the Navy—income-tax was increased to no less than tenpence in the pound. The Emperor Napoleon III was the contemporary bogey; but there have been worse ones. It is true that he annexed Savoy and Nice, yet in the midst of our alarm—and while Home, the medium, was giving demonstrations of spirit-rapping and table-turning at the Tuileries—we managed to conclude a commercial treaty with him, and passports for British visitors to France were abolished. On the other hand, and though we seemed to have laughed at them a good deal ourselves, this was the great year for the Volunteer Rifle Corps. "Form, form, Riflemen, form!" sang the Poet Laureate, momentarily interrupting his work on *Idylls of the King*. Her Majesty attended a number of their reviews.

But John Bull wasn't really frightened. Foreigners were still comic and contemptible. There was some trouble going on in Italy, which enabled our journalists and cartoonists to be remarkably frank and offensive. Except about Garibaldi, whom they accepted as a romantic hero. Other characters came off less lightly, and in April Mr. Punch (in whose pages John Leech was still going very strong) actually took it on himself to excommunicate the Pope. Not very much diffidence or undue sensibility about that.



What else was happening in 1860? The Prince of Wales visited America; as did the *Great Eastern*, on her maiden voyage. Toni Sayers fought the *Benicia Boy*. Constance Kent murdered her little step-brother—though it was another five years before her confession revealed the truth. *Great Expectations* was published. The game of "Aunt Sally" was introduced. G. P. R. James, prolific butt of so many other writers, passed away. Peking was entered for the first time by foreign troops—and the first Pekingese dogs set sail for England. The *Cornhill Magazine* was founded, with Thackeray as editor, and Ruskin contributed *Unto This Last*. Cambridge won the Boat Race. Mr. Merry's *Thormanby* won the Derby. Phelps and Buckstone were ornaments of the London stage. Carlyle was still toiling away in Chelsea at his life of Frederick the Great.

And so on. Naturally and inevitably such a conspectus, of eighty years ago, can only serve to remind us of what we have read and heard. Naturally and inevitably, also, there is a kind of bright simplicity about anything seen from so far away. The colours are heightened. The shadows hide nearly everything else. No doubt the present age will take on the same appearance in due course; names and events may stand out, but the whole scene will have shrunk, and much of it will have vanished altogether. Or perhaps, as change comes faster and faster, even less time will be needed to blur the little everyday details which mean so much to us now.

Always, anyhow, the ordinary lives of ordinary people—though without them there would have been no scene at all—will be the first to fade. Sometimes, perhaps, we find ourselves thinking of them vaguely; at one moment pitying them for hardships of which they were quite possibly unaware, or at another moment envying them, for of course there is always that curious and contrasting sense of security about the past. But to go back, in our imaginations, for eighty years; to forget all that lies between; and, as if this weren't difficult enough, to place ourselves in a little Scotch town well north of the Firth of Tay and nearly five hundred miles from London—

The effort must be made, though. And, if possible, another effort to realise that at that time, and to themselves, the people who lived there were quite as real, and quite as human, as we who can now telephone to their successors at any moment that we choose.

They were good, and bad, and a mixture of both. They loved and quarrelled. They hoped and despaired. Their simpler lives were only outwardly and comparatively simpler. And because one

of their main interests—as elsewhere in Scotland at the time—lay in religion and the subtler distinctions between various forms of public worship, we shouldn't think of them as absorbed in this and nothing else. They worked, and quite a lot of them played. They read, or if they couldn't read, then others read to them. They talked, though you might have found it rather difficult to understand them. They fished. They dug in the ground. They drank, or some of them did. They smoked and took snuff. Few of them felt that they were imprisoned, either in time or space. And there can have been hardly one of them who didn't—as is the habit of human beings—regard their birthplace as the real centre of the civilised world.

Its name—as there is less than no need to tell you—was and remains Kirriemuir. Kirric, they have always called it, affectionately, as it were, and for short. If you haven't been there, or don't happen to have a map hanging on the wall, we might try to explain where it is.

You know Scotland? You know how it prances so gallantly towards the North Sea? It achieves this effect partly by being tilted a little westward from the top of England, and partly from the angle of the three main inlets on its eastern coast. The Moray Firth, the Firth of Tay, and the Firth of Forth. Inland, between the first two, rise the big ranges of the Grampians. South-east of them, beyond where they have dropped and frayed into a series of glens, lie the lower stretches of Strathmore. South-east of this, again, rise the Sidlaw Hills, which in turn look down on Dundee and the Firth of Tay.

Now we go back again. Kirriemuir stands north of the Sidlaws, south of the Grampians, a little more than twenty miles due east of Montrose on the coast, and—which may be clearer and is just as important as all this—looks out on and is surrounded by some of the most beautiful country in the whole of a notoriously beautiful land.

Here it would be so easy, and so very uninformative except to those who know them perfectly well already, to reel off the names of a string of mountains, lochs, glens, forests, rivers, and ruins. Consideration and self-control cut this down at the moment to a repetition of the statement that they are all beautiful. Hauntingly beautiful, in summer greenery, in the purple and gold of autumn, or in the whiteness of winter snow. But, again, what we are really trying to describe is that little town.

So small, eighty years ago—not that it is large even to-day, when the actual population has diminished—that perhaps you think we ought to call it a village. Yet it was nothing of the sort. It had so many streets and wynds that you could easily be lost among them. Roads set out from it to every point of the compass. Its outlying portions even had different names of their own. Tillyloss, between the road to Brechin and the Hill where all sects and denominations sleep in the same cemetery. Southmuir, divided from it by the steep valley of the “commonty” and the Gairie burn. It is this burn which, a little nearer its source, and now running to the east of the town, flows through the ravine which is known as the Den. About three hundred feet lower than the top of the Hill, so that Kirriemuir is a place where one nearly always seems to be climbing or descending.

Its own general colour has always been grey and pink. Grey for the slate roofs and pink for the stone from the neighbouring quarries. Eighty years ago very few of the buildings had more than two floors, with perhaps a garret above them. Many of them had the outside stairs which were doubtless an advantage when two families shared the same house. But a certain little cottage—as we should call it nowadays—with its back to the Brechin Road, and its door and four windows facing south, was grey all over and had its single flight of stairs inside. This was where David Barrie, the weaver, and his wife, Margaret Ogilvy, were living in 1860, when their third son and ninth child was born.

You see, therefore, at once how much more important it is for a man of genius to come into the world at the right time than in what might, at first sight, look like the right place. What chance has a ninth child of being born at all at the present day? Precious little. So perhaps that was the first clever or fortunate thing that this particular child can be said to have done. May the ninth. Eighteen-sixty. James Matthew Barrie has arrived in Kirriemuir.

The cottage was one of the tiniest you can ever have seen. Just four rooms—all small, and the two to the right of the outer door even narrower than the others—with those stairs running straight up the middle. Yes, but wait a moment. Only three rooms for living purposes. David Barrie’s hand-loom occupied, and must have nearly filled, the narrow room on the ground floor. By 1860 two of the little daughters had been dead for nine years. Alexander, the eldest son, was away at Aberdeen University except at Christmas

and in the summer. But Mary, the next child, would still be only fifteen. Jane Ann was thirteen. David, seven. Sara, six. Isabella, two. Three years later another daughter, Margaret, was born.

The imagination has its work cut out here, even though we know that somewhere about this time the father and breadwinner managed to move to another workshop near at hand. Quite often, almost certainly, there must have been at least twice as many occupants as rooms in that little house in the Tenements—as the group of houses was then known. To-day—when they have been renamed “Lilybank”—this kind of multiplication and division seems incredible and almost impossible.

Not in those days, though, when in addition to this congestion you must picture the constant clatter and racket from all the neighbouring looms. Morning, noon, and night. All for a wage which would now be thought incredible and impossible too. Yet this isn't the way to judge what was happening eighty years ago. The noise, the weavers' earning-power, and the size of their families all seemed natural and normal enough then. There is no need to pity the Barries in their four-roomed cottage. They knew they weren't rich. The elder ones must have known also that at any moment an accident to the breadwinner would mean disaster for all. But as against this they were born and brought up to faith, courage, and prayer. And meanwhile they certainly didn't think of themselves, nor would they have been regarded by their fellow-townpeople, as “the poor.”

David Barrie—forty-five this year—was an employer of other weavers, in a small way, as well as a weaver himself. On however diminutive a scale, he represented Capital as well as Labour. It might take a microscope to detect his turnover, but ends met. The simple necessities were always forthcoming. Not much more, perhaps, at this stage, but the world hadn't beaten him and didn't look like beating him so long as he was granted his health.

Well, he lived to the age of eighty-seven, and only then met his death by mischance. If his ninth child had been no luckier or more successful than the others, his own industry and character, and the industry and character of his eldest son alone, would have assured him a sheltered and respected old age. He hadn't by any means finished rising by his own efforts and talents when that ninth child was born.

Powerful temptation at this point—eighty years afterwards—to

generalise about all Scotch breadwinners at that period. To represent them, without exception, as simple, honourable, conscientious, hard-working, and doggedly ambitious. Reason and even records show that there were weaklings and wastrels as well. Yet we shouldn't feel the temptation without fairly solid grounds for it. Hundreds and thousands of Scotch breadwinners would have fallen into this precise category. If we look for an almost perfect individual example, David Barrie, linen manufacturer of Kirriemuir, is our man.

He wasn't particularly well-read, and indeed can have had little time, let alone spare money, for books. He was no great talker, though the Scotch can convey a great deal to each other by short sounds which are indistinguishable to the southron. But he had a deep reverence for learning, for the pulpit, and for genuinely liberal politics. If we could cross the gulf of time and meet him as he was in 1860, we should still be a long way from getting to know him; for he was reserved as well as silent; we might easily find him terrifying and rather grim. Yet he was loved and admired by all under his roof. And only feared—though seldom if ever, we should imagine, by his wife—as it is rightly recommended that one should fear God.

He married in his twenty-seventh year; his wife, on their wedding-day, being just twenty-one and a half. Her father, Alexander Ogilvy, was a local stone-mason—there is no trace of anything but Kirriemuir in our hero's ancestry—and for a description of this equally high-principled and hard-working Scotchman you would do far best to turn to the chapter in *Margaret Ogilvy* called "What She Had Been." Knock out some of the sentiment, if you feel capable of such a feat, and you will still find the portrait of another character whom it is impossible not to admire. He was left a widower when his daughter was a child of eight, and when her brother—another David—was three years younger. He worked for them in the pink quarries and brought them both up—so that there is no need to look far for the little girl taking the place of a mother, who was always darting from his grandson's pen. By the date of his death, twenty-four years later, the daughter was married and had had five children of her own, while the son had passed triumphantly into the ministry, and had already served five of his fifty years at a Free Church manse in Motherwell.

It's rather staggering, this background of unswerving determina-

tion; of the sacrifices which achieved its end. Did Doctors of Divinity spring so inevitably and invariably from the homes of simple stone-masons in Scotland in the nineteenth century? Or, again, would you expect the son of a working weaver—as in the case of Alexander Barrie—to win a bursary at Aberdeen University, and, not so very long afterwards, one of the first of Her Majesty's Inspectorships of Schools? Statistics—which aren't available anyhow—might show how few actually attempted, and how fewer still attained, this kind of promotion from the ranks. Yet positively there were—yes, and still are—plenty of cottages bursting with similar ambition. Parents and sisters toiling and saving so that sons or brothers might stay the arduous course. Sons and brothers sticking to it, with all their might, until they reach the goal. If this is generalising again, it is a generalisation which has been fair enough, for a very long while, in Scotland. The instances of David Ogilvy and Alick Barrie are remarkable, but far from abnormal.

It was the stone-mason who was a member of the Original Seceders—though the real origin of secession in Scotland goes far further back—or, as they were also known, of the Old Lights. Or Auld Lights. The implication of both names is that in setting themselves apart from the rest of the Church—which by 1860 had been split into at least five other categories in Kirriemuir alone—they were claiming not only independence but that their method of public worship was the purest and least corrupt. It may be seen, too, that with so many sects to dispute this, to dispute with each other, and to unite, at this time, only in their horror of the Church of England (which was also locally represented by what the natives insisted on calling a chapel), there was plenty of opportunity for what Scotchmen have always enjoyed. Heavy, whole-hearted argument, and stubborn adherence to their own point of view. Did they ever convert each other? Possibly, or in rare cases, though any dialectical victor would almost certainly think the less of his proselyte's strength of character. For apart from recurrent and large-scale schism, it was held that a decent citizen would always stand by the sect in which he had been born.

Nevertheless, just as the cemetery on the Hill overlooked not only Kirriemuir, in one sense, but its spiritual sub-sections in another, so it was also held that marriage was a perfectly honourable means of bridging these bottomless gulfs. Common sense, at this point, seems to have gained a striking advantage over obstinacy; and accordingly,

when Margaret Ogilvy left her father's cottage to start a fresh life with David Barrie, it was thought quite natural that she should accept and adopt his form of religion as well. So little Jamie, like his brothers and sisters, was baptised in the South Free Church, and remained a member of it—in so far, at any rate, as he never joined any other—for the rest of his life.

He was never an Auld Licht himself, and his mother had worshipped elsewhere for nineteen years when he was born. But childhood is what counts, almost always; and it was her childhood's memories that were presently to be given the touch of magic which would make the two words "Auld Licht" known all over the English-speaking world. Not, of course, and so oddly, that more than one in a thousand would ever be able to pronounce them.

## 3

"It is all guess-work," wrote J. M. Barrie in 1896, "for six years." For the first six years, he means, in that crowded little house in the Tenements, as consciousness and intelligence came to him, and he found himself one of a large family, surrounded for six days in the week by the clatter of the looms. Gradually no doubt, the horizon widened. He would have learnt not only the way across the common to the long services on Sundays, but much or most of the bewildering geography of his native town. Very easy, also, to get out of it—down towards the Den, up on to the Hill, beyond it towards Caddam (or Caldham) Wood, or southward on the road leading to Glamis. No child could be expected to realise the beauty of these walks, nor was there anything yet with which he could compare them. From the top of the Hill, by one of the prehistoric Standing Stones which are dotted about this countryside, he could have looked down—five miles or so—and seen Forfar. Perhaps he was taken there sometimes. But it is all guess-work.

What we, so long afterwards, have always to remember is that the Kirriemuir of which he will be writing later on is mostly, and at first entirely, a Kirriemuir which he never knew. It is his mother's or even older than that, built on her memories and on what she had once heard. No guess-work, then, that some of this was reaching him towards the end of those six years. But for the rest, though there are legends and a few facts, it is mainly a question of how

far our imagination can see a little Scotch boy in the thick of all the other Scotch children of his age. Very little to distinguish him yet. Or perhaps nothing, unless, in some miraculous manner, we can retain our present knowledge, and yet go back there and be told who he is. He wasn't precocious. Nobody seems to have thought him particularly clever. If he was sensitive, so were the other children, each in their own way. Most of them were receiving almost exactly the same impressions.

To-day any pilgrim who visits his birthplace will be shown the very small, communal wash-house—shared by those who lived round it and standing a few yards from the Barries' door. There is still a copper in one corner of it, though it doesn't look as if it were often used. Here, also, we know that he played, and because of what he wrote of his games there, in the preface to the published edition of *Peter Pan*, it is now boldly described as Sir James Barrie's First Theatre. Yes and no, some of us may feel. We see what they are driving at, and the preface can certainly be quoted against us if we tend too much towards No. Yet other children have played in wash-houses and elsewhere, and his principal playmate grew up into an ironmonger. It may be all right for the picture post-cards and for a successful dramatist looking back at the distant past, but somehow it doesn't satisfy us as a real contribution to his career. There it is, though, and we should be the last to say, in the light of subsequent events, that it isn't touching and interesting.

So, if you like, is another story—his own again—of the first, amateur puppet-show which he saw, at about the same age, in a room over the bookseller's shop in Bank Street, where he did much of his early reading. This, most positively, wasn't what turned him into a playwright. Yet the glimpse is human and cosy. For a moment the past seems nearer and more real. The little boy had fun, we feel, in those far-off, forgotten days. The background isn't entirely composed of long upper-lips, of fierce whiskers, and carefully preserved Sunday blacks. There was a lot of hard work going on all round him, and precious little of what we should consider luxury or even comfort, yet there were games for such children, indoors or out, all the year round. Some of them are listed, though hardly explained, in *Sentimental Tommy*. Spy, smuggle boots, kickbonnety, peeries, the preens, suckers, pilly, buttony, palaulays, and fivey. Perhaps they sound rather strange to us by these names, but there seems to have been a fine selection, anyhow. And one



thing is certain; that little Jamie always had an eye, as it is called, for any sport involving a good aim. He was proud of this, and with reason, as long as he lived.

Then there was fishing, though it wasn't until he was grown-up and came to England that he learnt to cast a fly—and, incidentally, hooked his host and instructor by the nose. Fairs, too, and travelling shows, returning and reappearing in due season. Simple but unforgettable experiences in the age of innocence, and never banned or barred, apparently, by a community which, for all its preoccupation with religion, stopped short of actual puritanism on week-days. Yes, lots of fun, and plenty of opportunities for a reasonable amount of mischief, too, for the children in Kirriemuir during the sixties.

And of course, if a little surprisingly, there was cricket. We don't, somehow, associate this with Scotland at that period; but there it was, in Kirriemuir at any rate, so of course—whatever their bats and balls might be made of—the children would have their own version of it too. Everyone knows how this passion remained with one of them always, but his elder brother, as another example, was just as keen a follower of averages and scores. It got into their blood and stayed there. Again one has to realise that Kirriemuir wasn't a place where it was always Sunday afternoon.

More legends and memories. Of the time when little Jamie was four, so he says, and ran off hurriedly because there was a chance of seeing an old man who had committed suicide. This doesn't sound unduly sensitive, though no doubt he was as sorry as any other little boy would have been when he got there.

Of the time when he was six (so he says), and changed clothes with a friend who was in mourning. So that the friend might go on playing, while little Jamie sat apart and wept. That, whether literally true or not, is getting decidedly more like J. M. Barrie. Tommy Sandys did this too, you may remember. But of course we are still a long way, in a sense, from Tommy.

Of the next-door neighbour, Bell Lunan, into whose house he ran so often, and in whose kitchen bed he would hide from the passing wrath of his parents. The really fascinating thing about her was the stick—or the staff, as it would be known—without which she was unable to walk. The childish Jamie took this away from her sometimes; as heartless a tease as any other little boy. Again, though the connection is obvious, we are still a very long way from Jess McQuimpha. But J. M. Barrie knew and admitted it. After the

old lady's death, the staff came to him in London. After his own death, it returned to her grand-daughter in the same little house.

And so on, during those first six years in the misty past. Love and a certain amount of firmness for the David Barries' youngest son, though doubtless he was also a little spoilt at times by his mother and elder sisters. Yet plenty of rough-and-tumble in which high spirits could be exercised and sometimes bring their own quick punishment. Not really so much a hard school, for the beginning of life, as one where nothing was made abnormally easy. Sometimes, we may reasonably imagine, butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. Sometimes, unquestionably, he was a "little deevil." But learning things all the time, and in a setting where he would learn little or nothing but what would help to form anyone's character. To be one of a large family, however humble, where virtue and respectability are in the very air that is breathed, is a sound beginning for any child in any age. Nobody can say that the young Barries were unfairly handicapped. Only that they didn't happen to enter the world with a flying start.

Facts. In 1862 Alick, now twenty, graduated, with first-class honours in Classics, at Aberdeen. Well done, Alick. One can almost see his parents setting their teeth to conceal the extent of their pride. Having to remind themselves, though they couldn't exactly have forgotten, that momentous as this was, it was only another rung in his ladder. Besides, this wasn't the only local triumph. In the same month and at the same seat of learning, one Alexander Whyte—son and formerly apprentice to a Kirriemuir shoemaker—was capped after gaining a second in Mental Philosophy. These boys were friends, and had shared the same Spartan lodgings as undergraduates. Whyte aimed at the Ministry, got there, and was a famous preacher for many years in Edinburgh. His own son became a Member of Parliament, a Knight, and a K.C.S.I. Comment, as they say, is unnecessary, and might again be misleading. But you see what could be done.

Alick, on the other hand, was to be a schoolmaster, and for the time being disappears, in this capacity, into Lanarkshire. Mary, his eldest sister, accompanied him, but we shall hear of both again. In the same year James Barrie, their grandfather, died.

1863. The last of David and Margaret's children is born. Another Margaret, but to be known as Maggie. Little Jamie's nose out of joint? Not more than is good for him, perhaps. Not nearly such a

dislocation as if there had been another son. At forty-four he can write "One girl's more use than twenty boys." But the expert on mothers knew well enough what *they* think.

Eight children, or eight living children, for the David Barries now. Jane Ann, the eldest at home, is sixteen, and already assuming responsibilities well beyond that age. Her mother leans on her, and will lean more and more heavily as the years go by. There is a beautiful side to this, and J. M. Barrie is going to blazon it throughout the world one day. But it will be a tale of human sacrifice, too. Willing, but rather terrible.

Three more summers and winters of the guess-work period, and then just as the shadow of education was falling across little Jamie's path—he ran away, he says, from his first school after one day, but was soon caught and sent to another—tragedy entered his life and struck, as it was to go on striking to the end of it, a cruelly unexpected blow.

Even allowing for all that is always said, and believed by those who say it, of young lives suddenly cut short, there can be little doubt that his brother David—now nearing the end of his fourteenth year—was as bright, as industrious, and as full of promise as the remarkable Alick. Gayer, perhaps, or so it seemed when thinking of him afterwards, and whether already ambitious for himself or not, the second and possibly the greater object of his parents' aspirations and prayers. Alick had done well for himself, was an M.A., a schoolmaster who was to go far in that calling, and further still when he was set over other schoolmasters. But David was to be a minister and bring even greater glory to his name. Those who were old enough to plan such dreams knew it, with the joint assurance of humility and pride.

In January, 1867, he was a pupil, under the care of his elder brother and sister, at their private school in Bothwell, Lanarkshire. On the eve of his fourteenth birthday there was a frost, and not even while skating himself, but standing watching a friend set off on the one pair of skates which they shared, he was accidentally knocked down by this boy, fell, and fractured his skull.

There was little if any hope for him. His brother telegraphed immediately to their parents, and they set off at once for the station—for the little branch line from Forfar had been open now for more than ten years. The telegraph office was there in those days, and

before boarding the train David Barric the elder thought to ask if there were any further message. A second telegram had just been received. It told him that his son was dead.

The shock to both parents can be imagined. Far worse for them, far more dreadful than when their two little daughters had died in infancy. It was a catastrophe almost beyond belief, and the mother—as we are told in her youngest son's book about her—never really got over it. That little boy, who had gone to the station with her, vaguely excited by the atmosphere of crisis and wishing that he could start on such a long, adventurous journey too, was just of an age to understand nothing except that there had been some terrible change. Long, long afterwards he could still remember playing with his younger sister beneath the table on which the coffin lay. But this doesn't mean that the shock had spared him; for though actual memories of his brother soon faded, there was still the discovery that the world was a horrible place in which his mother could lie there weeping in her bed; as if suddenly transformed into someone else.

Turn, if you please, to *Margaret Ogilvy* for the story of how he tried to take little David's place, and to make that grief-stricken woman laugh. No other hand could, or perhaps would, have written such pages, and no paraphrase could possibly be as poignant and revealing. Yet it is the story of how a mark was set on a child's soul, as well as of the beginning of twenty-eight years of incessant and unalterable devotion. Here already, at six and a half, is the presage of what he won't afterwards escape or try to escape. Already his mother has let him be a little different from other boys, as she still thinks only of a boy who has gone. Yet even if she had guessed for a moment that she was fanning a spark, would this mean that for such extremity of sorrow she is to have nothing but praise, and no syllable of blame?

Perhaps it is all beyond us now, and of course it was no clearer to anybody then. Day follows day for the living, and *they* don't know, in the midst of it all, what they are really doing to their own and each other's lives. Many will still be unconscious long after they have done it. The inmates of that little house in the Tenements, simple as they may seem to us, weren't nearly as simple as characters in a play. They were far more complex and fluid. Even the mother wouldn't always weep, nor her son be free from bursts of infectious high spirits. Time would always be moving a little faster, and pro-

ducing subtler developments, than could ever be followed by the human eye.

So at about this period—having dodged Mr. Howie, who afterwards went up to Lossiemouth and had Ramsay MacDonald for a pupil instead—little Jamie put on his glengarry and attended a school kept by the two Misses Adam in Bank Street. A mixed school, of course—it was nearly all co-education in Scotland in those days, though nobody appears to have thought this either dangerous or odd—with the three R's as the mainstay if not the whole of the curriculum. It seems probable that he was already well ahead with two of them, for all the little Barries could read and write at a very early age. Their father would certainly have encouraged this, and it was knowledge for which a large family is again a tremendous help. "I suppose," writes Alick Barrie, in 1866, "Jamie will be out of *The Peep of Day*." And again, in the following year: "Don't let Jamie spend all his time in studying, but I suppose there is not much fear."

No, not very much, from all accounts. Or not very much peril of excess as a schoolmaster would be thinking of it. The Misses Adam weren't exactly the same as Miss Kitty and Miss Ailie in *Sentimental Tommy*, or as the two Misses Throssel in *Quality Street*, though they were indisputably their prototypes, but their establishment was anything but a forcing-house. Fees, lessons, rewards, and punishments were all on the simplest possible scale. "Last comes the Hunky School"—this was it—"which was for the genteel and for the common who contemplated soaring." Jamie's presence shows that his parents were as determined as ever that he should have every chance. But it was only a stepping-stone. He would have plenty of time for the other kind of study—outdoors and with his friends—and wouldn't be wasting it, to judge by subsequent results. While by the year of that second letter the next stage would already be settled and clear.

Alick—but perhaps we ought to call him A. O. Barrie now, for he was twenty-five, well away on his chosen career, and with a beard—was appointed classical master at Glasgow Academy in 1867. Again he was to set up house with his sister Mary. And again, as in the case of David, his kindness and strong sense of kinship had suggested that they should board and lodge their youngest brother while his education proceeded under their eyes. You see how they helped each other in that family, and how the father's sacrifices for the

eldest were already being repaid. Not that the girls were overlooked. All, except one, who had pledged herself to the hardest life, were to become pupil-teachers or teachers in their time. Until of these, all—again except one who devoted herself to her uncle, the minister at Mothelwell, and was ultimately adopted by him—were married and had homes and children of their own.

Glasgow, however, is eighty miles from Kirriemuir, Jamie was still only just seven, and the Misses Adam's pupils were hardly qualified to soar, even to an Academy, without a little additional preparation first. Or at any rate, this must have been thought advisable in the instance of one pupil who actually took away far more than they had ever taught him. So farewell to the Hanky School in Bank Street, until it reappears between covers and on the New York and London stage. Its pupil is now to have the best part of a year at the Free Church School at Southmuir, on the hill beyond the burn and the gas-works. Longer hours and older companions. Fees still infinitesimal, but promptly paid, no doubt, by that conscientious father; still at his hand-loom, yet, if ever he straightens his back and leaves it, faced with a portent even nearer and more revolutionary than the railway.

No one can say that the change, in this little town of weavers, has been rashly precipitate. Power-looms have been working elsewhere for nearly three generations. Dundee, less than twenty miles away, has been full of them for years. But in Kirriemuir—if it comes to that, not only in Kirriemuir—caution and individualism and lack of capital have preserved the older system until it is almost a curiosity. Will it last our time, or is the industrial flood to sweep over us here, too? Some are too old to notice or care. Others are doubtful, hopeful, puzzled, or anxious. David Barrie is over fifty now; a slow thinker, and no great talker; but observant, careful, one who has always looked steadily ahead and planned.

At the foot of the hill, this year, he—and the other weavers, too—will see the walls and then the chimney of a factory rising. The Wilkies are building it, and it still bears their name. No putting back the clock now. Steam and machinery are on their way at last. The old, bent men won't be wanted any longer. It is their grand-daughters who will stream in and out through Messrs. Wilkie's gates, and four years later through Messrs. Ogilvy's, a little higher up the Gairie, as well. But David Barrie isn't thinking of his grandchildren yet. Somehow, as the great change approaches, he must still

provide for the daughters and little son, none of whom—if he gets what he has always wanted—is to be a manual worker like himself. Education. That's the stuff. What is he going to do about it? He toils away, watches the new factory nearing completion, sees its new looms and spindles being carted from the station, but also looks steadfastly and courageously ahead. At the right moment, when nothing but his own character and resources behind him, he will have thought out and be ready for a change in his own circumstances, too.

Little Jamie knows nothing of all this. Goes to and fro between the Tenements and his new school, plays, fishes, bird's-nests, comes back again and sits at his mother's feet. That other change is still there in her, and always will be. Neither of them can forget it, though he has learnt now how to make her smile more easily, and perhaps this won't always be quite as difficult as it was. He has a passion for stories, and so has she. They read to each other, when there is time. She hears of his everyday adventures, which one suspects, somehow, that he can already heighten a little in the telling. Or she leads him back to the stone-mason's cottage and to all the incidents, remembered or still spoken of at the time, in her own girlhood. Especially, always, the one about her taking her father's dinner to him at his work, nearly forty years ago, in her white pinafore and magenta frock. For some reason this always makes the most tremendous impression on him.

Because of his very particular devotion? Or because, in the language of psychologists, that scene is for him, also, a means of escape?

Escape from what? He isn't eight yet, and nobody is unkind to him. Physically, he hardly knows the meaning of fear. He is never lonely for want of companionship. For hours at a time he is mischievous and amusing and makes everybody laugh. But the shock, the same unmentionable memory of what followed when that second telegram came, is still there and still haunts him. He feels safer in the past, where nothing like that, he feels, can ever have happened. He doesn't only listen to the stories, but—just as he changed places with that other little boy who was in mourning—he struggles to enter into them until he virtually succeeds. The period of his mother's childhood becomes as real as—and sometimes even more real than—his own. There are moments, just as the spell is broken, when he truthfully doesn't quite know whether he is her con-

temporary or not. Painful moments. The realisation that he hasn't escaped, after all. That he can't escape. That inevitably he must go forward into his own future. That though he can't go back, even to-day may perhaps afterwards seem less unbearable than to-morrow.

"The horror of my childhood was that I knew a time would come when I also must give up the games, and how it was to be done I saw not. . . . I felt that I must continue playing in secret. . . ."

Poor little boy. This was true; not all the time, no doubt, but often enough, and subconsciously almost always. He loved and relied on his mother, and this—for so it was written—was what she had done to him. That background of ambition, too. It's a pretty wonderful thing on paper, and we are bound to respect and admire it. But it was a little merciless. It instituted comparisons; it induced a precocious sense of responsibility; if a child knew, in his heart, that it was utterly beyond him to equal his eldest brother's record, this would be a load and too much of a load on him all the time.

"Wait till I'm a man, and you'll never have reason for greeting again." This was what little Jamie said to his mother, and she remembered it when he had gone further than her first-born on a road of his own. And of course thousands of other children must have said it—whether their words were remembered afterwards or not—and have believed at the moment that they meant it.

But little Jamie did mean it. In the midst of his games, and as yet with only the vaguest idea of how it was to be accomplished, he had formed a resolution more desperate and dogged than anybody guessed. To rise, somehow, not only to the heights to which his parents were pointing, but so much higher that nothing could drag any of them down. This was his mission, and nothing should stop him. Do you hear?

No answer, from Destiny, though it heard this unspoken challenge well enough. A grim, invisible smile, perhaps, at the thought of others who have made the same boast, and of what it must always cost them if they are to have their own way. No warning. No pity. Go ahead, little Jamie, if that is your wish. Nothing has ever stopped anyone, as long as they really mean what you have just said. Yet these things are paid for, by yourself and others. They always have been, and they always will be.

The serious little boy is smiling again. Laughing, very likely. He is only a child, after all, and there are still any amount of childish thoughts and deeds to come first. Jokes, and practical jokes. Hours



—days, perhaps—when he is no different from the other little boys, and feels no different, as he plays or works with them up there in Kirriemuir. That tremendous determination is shaping his course, and he'll stick to it. But he will have to be a little older first, whether he likes it or not, before he can dash forward, overcome or hurl aside all difficulties, and win what he has promised his mother and himself. Meanwhile, whenever he thinks of it—which is often enough—he *knows* that the far-off future will be no match for Jamie Barrie.

Yet meanwhile, also, there is another test for his pluck or character in the immediate future. His grown-up brother and sister are now settled in Glasgow and are ready for him. Plenty of mutual affection here, and of course it isn't like going off to a strange boarding-school. But eighty miles were a greater distance then than they are now, and at eight and a quarter this will be the first time that he has left home. August, 1868. Farewell to Kirriemuir. Not for ever. He will be there again and again for many years, and often for months at a time. But this is the end of the longest continuous period that he is ever to spend there, until his body is laid to rest in the cemetery on the Hill.

Eight and a quarter. Small and anxious in his little jacket and knickerbockers and his glengarry bonnet. Determination accompanies him, and memories reaching back a long way before his birth. His luggage doesn't appear to amount to very much, but there is a great deal more of it than the railway company or anyone else can see.

[Note on pronunciation, and another matter. The Scotch pronounce 'Jamie' so that in sound it is almost indistinguishable from the English 'Jimmy.' The surname 'Ogilvy,' which is a very common one in the district—though far from common in the sense that it is also the family name of the Earls of Airlie, whose seat, Cortachy Castle, is a few miles north of Kirriemuir—is, of course, a dactyl, and local pronunciation favours a first syllable which, as near as makes no difference, rhymes with 'bog.'

The other matter is even subtler. For quite a while now the Scotch have let it be put about—possibly for the confusion of other nations whom they despise—that it is incorrect to use the word 'Scotch' at all. That we should avoid this by using 'Scots' or 'Scottish' in any context or contingency that may occur. Yet it

can hardly be doubted that Barrie was a pure-blooded representative of his race, and in his own speech and writings he almost invariably employed 'Scotch.' In his first book, indeed, he writes, quite shamelessly, of 'the Flying Scotchman.' If this was good enough for him, surely there is no need for the rest of us to pause and think three times before deciding which variant should be used. Let us stick to 'Scotch,' then, wherever it sounds natural, and out-face any critics—Scotch or otherwise—who would drive us from this reasonable and quite unambiguous position.]

## 4

Glasgow Academy, which has produced some other fairly notable pupils in its time, was a large, square, ugly building overlooking the River Kelvin. Strictly speaking, in fact, it was in Hillhead, which was then an outlying suburb on the edge of the open country to the west. But of course Glasgow has swollen since those days, Hillhead and a lot of the country have been swallowed whole, and the distinction no longer really exists.

Alick or A. O. Barrie and his sister Mary lived in a turning off the Great Western Road about half a mile or so from the school, so that their little brother and lodger would return there for his mid-day meal with them. The hours at the Academy were not unduly long, and the subjects were still actually more simple than advanced; but the length of the session or term was certainly and considerably more than a modern schoolboy is expected to endure. There was one long vacation, of six weeks or thereabouts, towards the end of the summer; there was a week at Christmas; and that—except for such incidental breaks as the Queen's birthday, public holidays, and Fast Days—was all. Nothing at Easter. And the incidental breaks much too short, even if money were no object, to allow any pupil to get as far as Kirriemuir. It must have seemed a very long way away sometimes, both in time and space. The little exile would think of it and dream of it, and see it even more clearly sometimes than when he was there. That would be natural, for it was still his real home.

It is on record of A. O. Barrie's friend Alexander Whyte—who hadn't reached Edinburgh yet, but was already a minister and living

at this time in Glasgow too—that when, at an earlier stage, he had a little school between Kirriemuir and Forfar, the highest fee paid to him was threepence-halfpenny a week. Glasgow Academy was, of course, a considerably more important establishment, yet no parent, in all probability, was paying more than five pounds a year. Again rather staggering and illuminating—not to mention the effect on modern parents, who will find their mouths watering and their eyes popping out of their heads. But this was the standard, and whether David Barrie was also contributing to the cost of Jamie's board and lodging or not, even five pounds a year was still a big bite out of his income. Worth it? No doubt of that, for education was everything, and of course Jamie must eventually reach the University too. Think of even a master-weaver's earnings, and of the four daughters still under the weaver's roof. Does the five pounds seem any bigger yet? It ought to. And Messrs. Wilkie's factory had opened now. More than ever must David Barrie plan and look ahead.

We haven't—though it is now 1869—quite reached the date when a decision must be made or else forced on him. The hand-loomers were still clattering—some rather desperately and defiantly—when Jamie came home this summer. Slight sense of heroism for him, perhaps, after his long absence so far away. The object, for a day or two, of a certain amount of curiosity and even reluctant admiration from his old playfellows. Very glad indeed to be back, and trying hard, we should say, not to think of the end of the holidays. For when a child spends three years in a big city, and says as little about them afterwards as in this instance, one can hardly feel that they were the happiest part of his life.

It looks as though he were slightly overwhelmed by them. They weren't unbearable, and his tributes to his brother's kindness always came readily and sincerely; but he was homesick and just a little lonely. Driven in on himself, letting a great deal of what was happening pass over his head, while his real thoughts were elsewhere. Some experts say that the faintest trace of a Glasgow accent was superimposed on his native Forfarshire at this period, but if so this was one of the few traces that remained. He did his work, and went for long walks with his brother and Alexander Whyte, but on the whole these were years of waiting, or of quiescence and drift. What else could they be, perhaps, when his childhood was ending, and the wings that he had dreamt of were still but a faint itching on his little shoulders?

Sixty years later, when he was invited to open the Glasgow Corporation's Annual Housing and Health Exhibition at the Kelvin Hall, he seems to have done his best to remember those schooldays, and to recall something which would express a sense of gratitude to his hosts. But it wasn't very much. He used, he said, to be allowed to throw in the balls for the elder boys when they were playing cricket. And one day he lost a penny at a horse show, returned at night, climbed into the ground, and found threepence. "No wonder," he concluded, "I have a friendly feeling for Glasgow." The audience laughed; but a friendly feeling was a mild sort of compliment from a man who could flatter the places that he really loved until, for the moment, they hardly recognised themselves.

This year, also, he paid a visit to his uncle, David Ogilvy, in his manse at Motherwell, and wore the suit in which his first photograph was taken. The Glasgow photographer has draped a curtain over a table, placed a large volume on it, and quite obviously adjusted his client's limbs with immense care. The effect is decidedly uneasy. The client's right arm appears to be deformed, and his legs are crossed in a manner more perilous than natural. His hair is beautifully parted and brushed, but his expression manifests a good deal of anxiety. We cannot feel that any jokes about little birds flying out of cameras went very well that day; but of course, if it comes to that, the client always far preferred to make any jokes that might be going for himself.

The suit is well worth inspection and description. It consists of a velveteen jacket and pair of knickerbockers, heavily braided and frogged. There are curleycues on the legs, at the wrists, and again where it buttons under the chin. A little shirt-collar only just manages to make its presence known. There is no sign of the handkerchief which his mother had told him should always peep from his pocket on important occasions. But his diamond-check socks have been well and truly pulled up, and he is wearing a rather large pair of button-boots. The whole effect isn't the least funny, but extraordinarily touching. Because of what this little boy grew into, and because we are so far off? Very likely; but to-day the beholder cannot possibly look at it in any other way, and as well as that air of nervousness insists on detecting something rather special in the eyes and brow.

In the session of 1869-70 he won a couple of prizes—one was *The Buried Cities of Campania*, but of the other no record remains—and

on his tenth birthday his mother gave him a book called *Men Who Were Earnest*. Very improving, no doubt; and if he would have preferred something more like *Ivanhoe* or even less classical, no doubt he read it carefully and saw himself being just as earnest as any of the men. That was in May, 1870, and only a week or so later another and still more notable event took place. His family left Kirriemuir.

Yes, David Barrie had thought it out and taken the plunge. He was fifty-five now, but his responsibilities were almost as heavy as ever, and if he stuck to his hand-loom much longer there would be no work for either it or him. All the weavers were looking round, as the smoke poured from Messrs. Wilkie's tall chimney, wondering if they could readjust themselves, if their children could save them, or if the roar of the machinery was driving them towards the poor-house. But David Barrie was luckier or better able to take care of himself than some. He secured a post, not as an operative but in the counting-house, at Messrs. Laird's linen works in Forfar. Never again would he bend his back over anything more laborious than a desk. It might and it did lead to even greater independence, but meanwhile he couldn't possibly live five miles from his new job, so the whole household must move.

Jamie is said to have been with them at the time, and to have taken part in the actual exodus. Doubtless, in that case, he enjoyed the bustle and excitement, and ran about both helping and getting in the way. Yet doubtless, also—and though the new four-roomed house was to be almost twice as large as his birthplace in the Tenements—during the last moments there was a feeling of sadness and strangeness as well. And there was something else to take the edge off the adventure. His mother, already and ever since the tragedy of four years ago subject to periodical attacks of illness, was taken worse again now, and it was another three weeks before she felt strong enough to follow. One sees the little ten-year-old fussing over her on her arrival. Jane Ann, that wonderful second daughter, too. Always there, always devoted and considerate, often—like so many of them—prostrated by headaches of her own. Giving so much, and taking so little. Twenty-three now. Nearly half-way through her selfless, lion-hearted life.

Forfar, like the new house, was on a much larger scale than Kirriemuir, and during that first summer Jamie can have had but few friends there. There is also a suggestion that he may have had

some childish illness himself, for it was not until the end of October that he rejoined his brother and sister in Hillhead. This was his last session at the Glasgow Academy, and he left because his brother was leaving too. A new Education Bill was being prepared in London, and after all the years that the Scotch had taught and learnt, so successfully, without central supervision, the Government was planning unification under its own authority. Inspectors were to be appointed, and though the new Act didn't come into force in Scotland until the beginning of 1873, likely men were already being sought out or staking their own claims. A. O. Barrie was one of them. He resigned his mastership, and entered on a period of different work and training. It was thought better, and we may feel glad that it was, that Jamie should also make another change, and after the summer of 1871 he remained in Forfar and attended the Academy there.

Here we catch a glimpse of him in a second photograph; a group this time. Nineteen little boys and two masters have ranged themselves in front of a stone wall. At the back, disguising their probable age with black beards and top-hats, stand the ushers. Then comes a row of little jackets and trousers, with varyingly intelligent faces, and all—except the one who is wearing a cap like a miniature station-master—in glengarries. In front again are the younger pupils, seated, in knickerbockers, with their hands on their knees. At the extreme left little Jamie maintains his customary air of caution and reserve. Some of the boys are smiling, some look mildly curious, some of them seem to have removed their thoughts, if any, to other and more distant affairs. Little Jamie watches us guardedly. And again, whether this is our imagination or not, he seems to be much the most intensely and indissolubly himself. The more we gaze at this picture, the more our eyes return to that solemn, thoughtful little face. Of course it is our imagination when it seems to be saying "I'm only playing a part here, because I'm not quite ready yet." Or isn't it? These old photographs are fascinating, but of course, as soon as there is a clue to them, they are never entirely objective.

Something of the same sort of trouble seems to have affected several of these schoolfellows, who long afterwards produced memories which might actually apply to almost any little boy, though they insisted on them as evidence to the contrary. Well, there it is. If they, who knew Jamie Barrie, could look back no

more clearly or convincingly than this, who are we to say how often there was nothing to distinguish him or how often there were signs of the spark? We know perfectly well that we shouldn't back ourselves to be nearly as analytical or observant if we found ourselves in a strange class-room to-day. Boys are mysterious and always have been. No one knew this better, though he was a boy himself as long as he lived, than J.M.B.

1872, then. Two more prizes this year. *The Young Man-of-Wars Man* and *Chambers's Papers for the People*. The former, at any rate, sounds much more what the scholar would have selected for himself. A good mark, accordingly, for the Forfar Academy too. But this is the last of it, for the Barries are moving again.

Back, early in the year, to Kirriemuir. The head of the family has done so well in his new occupation that now, when Messrs. Ogilvy are about to open the second big factory on the banks of the little Gairie, he receives a still better position as their principal clerk. His return, therefore, is anything but a retreat, and there is no question of searching for the kind of dwelling where his ten children were born. He rents the upper part of a rather queer-shaped but solidly-built stone house on the south side of the town. And Jamie—after a spell at Webster's Seminary (his fifth change, if you count Howie's)—goes back to the Free Church School which he had left four years ago.

The house is queer-shaped because the rooms to the right of the entrance follow an acute angle at the junction of the Forfar and Glamis roads. On the ground and first floors there is a window actually set in this apex, and from each of them one may look out not only at all the traffic and foot-passengers entering or leaving by the south and west, but to the dip of the road leading into the main part of Kirriemuir itself. Beyond this dip are the roofs of the two factories. Further again are the houses, including the Tenements and the Auld Licht Manse, on the Brechin road. Furthest of all are the Hill and cemetery. A wonderful panorama in the distance, and in the foreground every opportunity for keeping in touch with local life. Those windows, and particularly the lower one, where Margaret Ogilvy sat so often when, later, her family occupied the whole house, are not mentioned merely as an architectural oddity. Their significance—though, for a reason, most pilgrims turn their backs on them now—is much greater than that.

'Strath View,' Southmuir, Kirriemuir. That is the new address—

or Barrie always spelt it like this, so we shall, too, though somehow it became 'Strathview' for others in time. Its story, as a house, since the Barries first went there, is that David Ogilvy bought it after a while—with the notion, subsequently fulfilled, of ending his own days there—and leased it to his brother-in-law. That at one time there was even further expansion, through the wall into the house next door. That later, again, this extra accommodation, was given up. Incidentally, that it is no great beauty from outside—Scotch houses, to be quite candid, very seldom are—but happens to have been given a most enchanting little semi-circular staircase.

So there they were in 1872; father, mother, several daughters, and Jamie. Jamie twelve years old now, and according to his own statement not only a voracious reader of Penny Dreadfuls, but for the first time an experimenter in snatches of similar or even more fantastic fiction himself. According to his own statement again—but in addition to constantly misrepresenting his real age in these glimpses, he frequently has the vaguest ideas of where he actually was—it was at the same period that a stern warning in *Chatterbox* caused him to steal out and bury his blood-and-thunder library in a field. Yet anyhow and always there were still the other stories from his mother, and the sharing of written romances which even *Chatterbox* might have approved. Adventure was the great thing, Jamie undoubtedly leading the way here. But would she tell him again about taking her father's dinner to him in that pinafore and frock? She would, and she did.

When not led astray like this, Carlyle was her man; and therefore Jamie's. Vast and, as some might say, overweening pride in this national hero—who had conquered even London—was of course a widespread Scottish characteristic. He was just one of us, they felt, and look what he has done! His success was therefore a personal credit to all of them, and as soon as it was established he wasn't only Margaret Ogilvy's pride and joy. If any of them found him heavy or obscure, they would never say so, because he was in some way their property and no one criticises what belongs to him. We are not mocking, either at Carlyle or the Scotch. He was a very great man, and the Scotch are a very great nation. Their loyalty only does them honour, and if any Englishman smiles at it that is only because in England, for some reason, we have our own form of reserve, and always tend to suspect our heroes until they are safely dead.



1873. Yet another school prize, and once more of an instructive nature. *Peoples of the World*. But now, also, yet another change is coming. A. O. Barrie received his official appointment as H.M. Inspector of Schools last year, and has been given charge of the district of Dumfries—which the Scotch scan and rhyme like the word 'police'. In its capital town he has taken a new house, and again his sister Mary is to be his unofficial assistant and housekeeper. Kindness and semi-paternal ambition lead him to suggest a renewal of the arrangement at Hillhead; that Jamie shall live with him and go daily to the Dumfries Academy. Agreed; gratefully, no doubt, by his parents. And much more hopefully, it would seem, by Jamie. For one thing he is five years older than at the beginning of his first exile, and for another his reading has so filled his head—despite all past experience—with ideas of the adventurous life of schoolboys in their 'teens, that he can hardly wait before he is in the midst of them. For example, wouldn't this new and still more distant establishment have a lodge with a one-legged lodge-keeper, and wouldn't the boys always be getting hold of gunpowder and blowing him up?

It was to be hoped so, anyhow, and surely he would meet all those queer but instantly-recognisable characters—the fat boy, the dunce, the dare-devil and the school sneak—whom somehow he seemed to have overlooked last time. Well, the great thing was that he would soon be in the thick of it and perhaps sampling a few rôles for himself. Except that he still has fits of impatience, or of anxiety as to how precisely he is to keep that pledge to his mother and himself, there is little need for us to be sorry for him in the summer of 1873. It hasn't occurred to him yet that he isn't to grow up into as fine and tall a man as his father or brother, and his headaches and bad colds are forgotten as soon as he is back at his games. Another visit, accordingly, to his Uncle David at Motherwell, and then something—perhaps another of the colds—to keep him back again from the beginning of the new term. Only for a few weeks, though. By the early autumn he has reached his destination—a town more than twice as large as Forfar, and this time nearly twice as far away as Glasgow—but his pangs are few and his expectations are high. Moreover, looking back on the next five years, either, so far as is possible, through his eyes or our own, we believe that for once there would be no exaggeration in calling them the happiest time of his life.

## 5

Of course there was a little strangeness at first, and though his brother had guaranteed that the school had a lodge, it was disappointing to find a female lodge-keeper, apparently in full possession of her limbs. Never mind. The bell was ringing, the boys were assembling—the girls, too, but that was quite simple in those days, because only the older boys ever noticed them—and still there was plenty from the school-stories which of course must begin to come true.

"You would have thought," he wrote, some time after distributing the prizes at the same Academy in 1893, and prompted perhaps by this odd experience to let his pen play with old memories; "you would have thought from the way they gathered round me that, though they had seen most things in their day, a boy was a complete novelty. Yet I cannot remember that they had more than three questions, which each asked separately, as if to catch me prevaricating.

"The first was, 'What is your name?' and my answer was invariably received with laughter. It struck them as a most gamesome name indeed.

"The second was, 'What school were you at before?' and nothing so ridiculous as the name of that school seemed hitherto to have come within their ken.

"The third was, 'How old are you?' and I told them I was twelve. Apparently it was a very odd sort of age."

Actually, of course, he was thirteen, though this isn't the first or last time that he makes the same mistake. Indeed, he and others seem frequently to have thought that he was a year younger than he really was, all the time he was growing up. Perhaps because he looked it, or even younger still. But investigation shows that this was only a confusing illusion.

And if the next extract from the same unpublished source is possibly another one, it is well worth quoting, and every reader can provide his own grain of salt. It is the story of how he thinks he has spotted one of those penny-serial characters at last. He invites us to believe that he edged up to him, "not without admiration," and whispered: "Are you the sneak?"

. . . . .

He glared, and answered that he would tell me between one and two, which was the dinner-hour, and I said, "Thank you," very innocently.

Presently I was at him again with the question, "Which one are you?" I had to explain that I wanted to know whether he was the comic one or the pilfering one, and then he said that he would tell me that between one and two also, and once more I thanked him cordially.

I hurried back to school long before two to get his answer, but it proved to be a mere evasion, consisting in his flinging my straw hat on to the roof of the lodge. He continued to do this daily until I clenched my fists at him, whereupon he clenched his fists at me, and I invited him to fling up my hat again, and he replied that so he would, too, and I said that I was waiting, and we asked each other sneeringly how long we were to be kept waiting, and then I announced that I would fling up his hat, and he expressed a curiosity to see me do it, and I said I would do it quick, and he said he was waiting, and I said I was waiting; and so it went on for years, so far as my memory serves, but neither of us touched the other's hat.

It's a joke, of course; that pen could never be trusted not to be funny once the bit was between its teeth. Or if it's true, then the pen has somehow managed to retain the essentials and yet add to their absurdity at the same time. But it isn't, in any case, how anyone would write if he had been bullied or life had been made a burden to him twenty years ago. There is happiness in that preposterous little story, and the Dumfries days, in the midst of that beautiful countryside opening out on to the Solway Firth, were full of it. The terms were still long and the holidays up in his native town were still all too short, but never, we may be thankful, during the five years was there a cloud that really darkened the sky. If he had made a bargain to stop being a boy at the end of them, he couldn't keep it, of course, and would have to pay for having thought he could. But at Dumfries Academy his spirit expanded and found sanctuary. Only the least little bit of him was in a hurry for the years to rush by.

He made friends there, he worked—not too hard, but quite hard enough to keep out of trouble—and he played any and every game that was going; not to mention, though they must be mentioned

in a moment, the games that he invented for himself. The breath of freedom ran through that school, as it does in day-schools where nothing enters to destroy it. "When you got round to the back, you saw that its imposing frontage was an imposition on little boys drawing nigh for the first time." Yet before the boys grew much older, all fear of it vanished, and from four o'clock in the afternoon they could express themselves in almost any fashion that they chose. They did, what is more. And soon enough, it is quite certain, Jamie Barrie was expressing himself with the best of them.

1874. Fourteen now, and two birthday presents which were always kept. *The Story of George Washington* from his mother—or the life, there can be little doubt, of another Man who was Earnest. And the silver watch (No. 57841), which his father bought for him from a pedlar; which accompanied him afterwards to London, and ticked in his pocket until the end. Summer at Kirriemuir. Back to school again; and here is another photographic group.

The boys in the front row are almost hulking. The boys in the second row have a distinct air of strength and solidity. But Jamie is in the third row this time, and though his reefer jacket rather falsifies the development of his chest, it is clear that he is a very small boy indeed. Still eager. Looking rather more of a handful than last time. No suggestion that Dumfries is quelling or stifling him. But very decidedly small.

Playing his games, though, as we know, like anything. Cricket and football in the field by the river, or further away against other schools, where victors and vanquished toasted each other in something called treacle beer. Skating—did his mother know of this, and did his brother try to stop him?—on the nearest loch, two or three miles away. A demon at marbles, which may not sound very athletic; yet played so violently that he was always wearing through the sole of the boot which he scraped along the ground. A fierce fighter at Stalkey—the Academy name for a rough-and-tumble form of Prisoner's Base.

And then, as well as all this, as well as the tremendous walks which helped to wear out the other sole too, the beginning of those dramatisations from all the boys' books that he devoured. Fenimore Cooper, Mayne Reed, R. M. Ballantyne—these and their like were his authors in the days at Dumfries. His brother, always a book-lover, may have supplied him with some of them, others could be borrowed from his Dumfries friends, but it was real luck that one

of these was the son of the local bookseller. Luck, that is to say, for Jamie, who was allowed to browse in his shelves as long and as often as he liked. The thought again suggested itself that books could be written as well as read. But meanwhile, if—forgetting about *Chatterbox*—one took those adventure-stories and played at being the more striking characters in them, wouldn't that release and express something else?

Hundreds of thousands of boys have done it. In a way it is the test by which that particular branch of authorship succeeds. Nor should we imagine that at first this playing at pirates, shipwrecked mariners and Red Indians was particularly elaborate or convincing to some of the actors. Just as at first it may not always have been Jamie who had the brightest and most ingenious ideas. But all this was already one essential side of his nature—to put his whole soul into the business of being other characters as well as himself—and whether his playfellows immediately spotted it or not, they must have realised soon enough that the games were never the same without him. He wasn't exactly their recognised leader, yet as the games reached their height, it was almost always Jamie Barrie who led. Who kept the log-book? Who was it who thought of tying coconuts to the trees that they climbed in that garden on the banks of the Nith? Who discovered that a nook among their roots was really a smugglers' cave? Who persisted in rubbing two sticks together until they actually smouldered in his hands?

It all fades, with most of the boys. Gradually or suddenly there comes a day when they are a little ashamed of it, or life interrupts them and when they look at the garden again, the magic is buried under the fallen leaves. If they remember it at all, it is as a distant dream; a happy one, perhaps, but they are grown-up now, and it is nothing to regret. This, very likely, is all just as it should be, for it would be a strange and unnatural world if none of them had ever turned into men.

But Jamie, though he knew that in a sense it was inevitable, didn't want to grow up. Always, with this fear in his heart, he had to play a little harder than the others, to go on playing, to cram more into it than the rest of them ever quite understood. So that never were there quite such games for the boys in Dumfries; though nearly thirty years later he was still leading and sharing in them with other boys—only momentarily, alas, his contemporaries—in pinewoods more than three hundred miles away.

Some letters turned up not long ago, written to a friend who had left school for an office in Edinburgh—a friend who died young—and dating from the years 1875 to 1877. 'They don't refer to the games, for these as yet could be played but never described; their interest, indeed, lies chiefly in the bubbling spirits of any ordinary, bubbling schoolboy. "We had splendid fun during the holidays." "We have been having some great discussions in the Debating Society." "The best fun, though, is at the monthly meetings for recitations, readings, etc."—at one of which the writer seems to have scored heavily with a rendering of "The Stuttering Minister's Speech".

"They are both splendid stories," he tells his correspondent, alluding to two Jules Vernes. In June, 1876: "The Gaiety Company from Glasgow are here just now. I was there on Friday seeing *As You Like It*. I liked it very much. . . . I am going down to see Sanger's Circus in a little, so please excuse hasty writing. . . . C. Wilson and I had a long walk a few Saturdays ago from Dumfries to Carlisle (33 miles in 9½ hrs.). It got into the papers under the head 'Plucky Pedestrians', a name the Academy boys have taken up and given us." This feat was apparently inspired by a professional pedestrian of the day who had set himself to walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours, and a few months later the same pair walked twenty-four miles one morning, and Jamie played in a football match when he got back. "After which," he writes, in his notes on this period, "I was missed from the school for a month. This ended our record-making, and after that McMillan was my chief companion." We shall come to McMillan in a moment.

But if there were to be no more attempts on records, there was still plenty of walking; and of fishing to accompany it, during the summer holidays at Kirriemuir. Here is another notebook ("James Barrie, 1876"), which starts off with some more than pedestrian verse by himself and his friends, which then breaks into some French lessons in another hand, continues with the owner's notes on Physics, and then, right at the end, gives us his "Fishing and Walking Statistics" for the holidays of that year and the next.

They are carefully entered in columns, showing Distance Gone Over, Catch, Name of the Stream, Name of Companions—mostly J. Robb (the boy who became an ironmonger), though twice he went out with his father—and General Remarks (such as "mostly

small", or "lost one very big one"). At the foot of each page are a summary and his signature. Like this:

Fished 12 times. Caught average of 2 doz & 6 in all 30 doz.

Walked 18 times. Average of 13 11/18 in all 245 miles.

J. M. Barrie. holidays. 1876.

And again:

Fished six times. Caught average of 2 doz & 6 in all 15 doz.

Walked in\* six times average of 13 5/6 in all 83 miles.

J. M. Barrie. holidays. 1877.

So that now he was seventeen, when—talking of averages—most compatriots who were aiming at graduation would, at that time, have been at their university for a year. But there was delay in Jamie's case; not that he regretted it, for though he had felt impatient when younger, he was glad enough to hold back from the threshold in these happy, fleeting days. The actual cause wasn't only that he still looked so very much less than his age—though this may have had something to do with it—but was probably due to his brother, who was also his educational guide. Alick had won that bursary at Aberdeen when he was sixteen, and everyone had once hoped that Jamie would do the same. Then there had been considerably less certainty, for though he was bright enough—and often enough it was impossible to resist his spirits—there was no sign of examinational brilliance. He held his own, he wasn't stupid or an idler, he even pulled in a certain number of second prizes; but bursaries at sixteen were quite beyond him. His father tried to be reasonable, but felt distinctly uneasy. His mother one may imagine as still faintly dreaming of the ministry, but meanwhile trying to side with everyone at once. Alick—kinder and more understanding than might always be expected in a professional educationalist—thought his brother should be given more time. So thanks to Alick, even an idea of trying for Aberdeen at seventeen was abandoned. The shadow of public failure was lifted, and Jamie's spirits rose again. His last two years at Dumfries had fewer pirates and redskins in them—for the other boys were growing up anyhow—but they were crammed pretty full of fun and self-expression, and were as formative as they were apparently almost

\* The difference between walking and walking in seems to be that the latter only applied to the fishing expeditions.

reckless of the future. Responsibility was round the corner, but instinct was quite right now in telling him to keep it there. Every month there was more inside him for when the real test came, and he didn't mean to shirk it when it did. Meanwhile, he was gaining two years of which, if he had been better at his lessons, he would have been robbed for ever. It was during them that he found his first flesh-and-blood hero, wrote his first articles, his first novel, and his first play. And during the last of all—but of course this might have happened anywhere—that he suddenly started noticing the girls.

After this he always had heroes—either men of action or men of letters—and from the moment that he adopted them they could never, even if they momentarily maddened him, do anything wrong. But James McMillan was the first and in memory perhaps the greatest of them. It was of James McMillan that he told his audience when, in December, 1924, the burgesses presented him with the freedom of Dumfries. Here is an earlier version—thirty years earlier—of the passage near the end of that speech.

One day there was a timid knock at the door of the rector's room [the rector was the headmaster], and a thin, frightened-looking boy with pale cheeks came in. We all decided at once that he was a boy of small account; but I suppose he was the greatest boy who ever attended that school.

He sat at the top of all his classes after the first half-hour, going up with a modest, apologetic manner which said, "I shall not disturb you any more, as I am never coming down again."

I think he was a little bewildered at finding us all so easy to beat, and perhaps he hoped that things would be different when he went to the University, but they were not, and he must have grown a little tired of the announcement, "First, James McMillan". . . .

Of the three great Scottish men-of-letters, one . . . gave some of his immortals a dinner in our town, the second is buried in it, and I often passed the third on my way to school. McMillan and I used to saunter up and down on the other side, lifting our hats every time he looked our way, and our walk became a good imitation of his, we were so anxious to be Carlyles also. But all the notice he ever took of his slaves was to brandish his staff at us once threateningly, which filled us with a boastful joy.



There were canoe voyages for us up two much-loved streams, when we became backwoodsmen, and left our mark on what we agreed were primeval forests, but my favourite pastime became a stroll with McMillan . . . to a ruined keep four miles away.

It is a spot heavy with romance, as indeed is all that favoured land. There we talked poetry, and fame, and the clash of arms and poor dead things said to escape back into the world for that horrid hour when day and night, their gaolers, are in the grip.

One would tell half of a story he had read, and the other had to work out the end. *The Gold Bug* was among our favourites, and we invented, as a consequence, many ingenious forms of secret writing to puzzle each other with.

One day we wrote something about ourselves in cryptogram and hid it in a crevice in the ruin, agreeing to have another look for it when we were men. So when I was a man I dug for it and found it, having then quite forgotten what it said. But before putting it back I spelt it out. It gave our names and ages, and said that McMillan and I had begun to write a story of school life, "by Didymus".

I remembered the story then, and that only one chapter of it was ever written, a middle one about our dramatic club. School life is not what a boy usually takes as the subject of his first book, and I think there was something rather pathetic in the choice. It was as if we knew already that the next best thing to being boys is to write about them.

Some day, perhaps, that book will be finished, but I must practise for a long time on men first. Men are so much easier to write about than boys. And there will be no McMillan to write the alternate chapters.

The book, as you know, was never finished. If it had been, there would be no need for anyone else to tell the story of the Dumfries Academy Dramatic Club. McMillan left in the same year as his collaborator, and after a brilliant career at Glasgow and Oxford, was stricken by a merciless disease from which he died when little more than thirty. But his friend never forgot him. "I never admired any boy so much as McMillan. The men I have wanted to be like have not been the clever ones."

Not always. That's true enough. The men-of-action heroes, though none of them was exactly stupid, would always run through

his life, while he watched them, and admired them, and tried on their ways and habits to see how they would fit. But we mustn't—just because of that unrestrained tribute—forget the literary heroes; even though it was *them* that he wanted to be like, and never (except, so he says, for some early shots at Carlyle) to imitate what they wrote. And writing was already getting deeper and deeper into his blood.

Here comes *The Clown*; the schoolboy magazine (in manuscript) started by his friend, the bookseller's son. To four of its issues he contributed 'Reckollections of a Schoolmaster: Edited by James Barrie, M.A., A.S.S., LL.D.' They were, of course, facetious and impudent, and the great joke—as the title suggests—was the number of mis-spellings. The point, for us, is that the wings were doing more than merely itch now. They were beginning to sprout. When he took up his pen, already something ran down his arm; something rather more, perhaps, than had been in his mind even five minutes ago. This is authorship, of course, and however crude the Reckollections were, already he was discovering that pen, paper, and the wish to write are only three of the ingredients which it needs; that unless something else is added or adds itself—and no one can ever quite explain how this part of the mystery is achieved—the work will perish before it begins to live. Was this how the real writers did it, then? Did they, also, find that something took hold of them, that they remembered things and thought of things, when they were actually writing, that could never be summoned except with pencil or ink? Would the same sort of result occur if one bought another exercise-book and set forth on a real journey in it?

Worth trying, anyhow. In fact, one had simply got to find out. So here, also, comes *A Child of Nature*—no less than a hundred thousand words this time, if this particular writer is to be believed. A tale, so he says, of Dumfries, containing a number of real characters, and "a very cynical work." According to his statement—but this is where we absolutely decline to say whether we believe him or not—he sent it to a publisher, who chose to attribute it to a "a very clever young lady," and offered to publish it for a fee of a hundred pounds. Yes, you can take that part of it or leave it; but the manuscript followed him round for another forty-five years, until one day he came on it in the Adelphi and destroyed it. There's no doubt about that. There's also no doubt that an auctioneer could have got a good deal more than a hundred pounds for it by this

time, though some of us can see the look of disgust with which such a suggestion would have been met. Well, he could afford to look disgusted, of course, in 1923, and *A Child of Nature* can only have been a loss to the curious and the collectors. It had served its real purpose while he was writing it, and there has never been a shortage of immature and unskilled books.

We haven't quite finished with his writing, though, during those last two sessions at Dumfries. He was a dramatist as well as a journalist and novelist, and here, in his own words again, is how the urge and inspiration came.

In my second last year (he writes, in those same brief notes on his schooldays), when it was pretty generally admitted that I was a boy who could never come to anything higher than a seat on a bank stool, a great actor visited the town, and after his second night half a dozen of us had fixed upon our profession. He was Mr. Toole, and we were to begin by being amateurs, and playing only in his pieces, each of us playing his part.

One of these arrangements had to be given up, but we wrote out some of his plays from memory; and if I would be the girl in *Paul Pry* I could be Harry Coke in *Off the Line*, and Paul would be my wife. This was agreed to, and for a third piece I wrote a melodrama in six scenes and fifteen minutes, in which I played all my favourite characters in fiction, artfully rolled into one. The name of this staggerer was *Bandalero the Bandit*,\* and when I visited the school I heard that there was a copy of it extant.

I was secretary that year, and as I never called any committee meetings, we got on nicely, but they deposed me next year, and then we had a secretary who called so many committee meetings that there was dissension twice a week. We rehearsed in one of the schoolrooms on dark nights, sometimes having to leave by the window because the lodge-keeper had gone to bed.

When I think of that dramatic club, it all melts into one enthusiastic boy, who was stage-manager. His pockets were always bulging with stage directions, which fell on the floor as he was being caned, and all the time the masters were thundering at him he was wondering how they would do for walking gentle-

\* Note for the curious and the collectors. This spelling is taken from the author in 1893, but the variants 'Bandelero' and 'Bandolero' also have some support.

men. He was great in low comedy, but not so good at mothers, while I came out strong as a young lady, with my hair tied to my hat. . . .

A newspaper, "with a report of our enterprise, was forwarded to Mr. Toole, who, being the kindest gentleman in the world, replied at once, and said facetiously that he hoped one of us would write a play for him some day. That amused us very much.

Or at any rate it amused J. M. Barrie in 1893, by which time J. L. Toole had accepted and appeared in two of his plays in London. Happy days, and surely a strangely complaisant rector, according to our ideas of Victorian Scotland, to let the boys give public performances of farcical comedies, sometimes in the school itself. Was all that legendary sternness confined to Sundays, then, or to other towns than Dumfries? Well, not entirely, it seems. There was a clergyman, a member of the governing body, who very much objected. But when the boys, for their second season, secured a long list of distinguished patrons, including the Duke of Buccleuch and Henry Irving, the clergyman climbed down. More bare-faced plagiarism, or writing out as much as they could remember, of plays which they had seen at the local theatre—that miniature play-house where Jamie first went behind the scenes, which has its chapter in *The Greenwood Hat*—and the author of *Bandalero* as a clergyman himself in one of them, and in another of his female impersonations earlier in the bill. But the Muse didn't supply him with a further original work. Perhaps he was too busy on *A Child of Nature*. Or even on a translation of two Odes of Horace—"the only occasion when I beat that fellow McMillan."

The last dramatic season was in March, 1878, but even then it seems no more to have occurred to this company than to Shakespeare's that they should be reinforced by any of the girls. Yet the girls—we are now quoting again—did loom considerably during the last year; especially the bad ones who sat at the bottom of their classes, which brought them very near to the top boy.

It is a remarkable thing (he goes on), not to be explained, but the more a boy wanted to sit near them, the greater was his difficulty in remaining top boy. When he had no desire to be near them he was there constantly. In this fatal year boys, even the fellows who could kick a goal at fifty yards, began to know a

girl by such a trifle as her hat, or a way she had of holding her head to the side and looking at you suddenly.

There were girls' schools in the town, too, and on more intent observation the young ladies attending them turned out to have characters, gestures, hair, noses that made them quite distinguishable the one from the other. They came to tea-parties in white or blue or pink things, and looked so soft that you wanted all at once to take care of them. To three of them who played lawn-tennis in a wood-yard I make my bow.

"You wanted all at once to take care of them." Yes, this had started now; but was it all that you wanted? Didn't you, from now on, have a dream that they might take care of you, too? You wanted to impress them, you wanted even more than this as you shrank from them at the same time. All those pretty faces—"looking at you suddenly"—as the long and then shortening years went by; didn't you still hope, when you found that you could always amuse them and keep them listening, that one after another would look up to you instead of at you, like the heroines of whom you read and wrote? And could even one of them love you as you wanted to be loved?

These are desperate, secret, painful questions to be answered or even to be asked. We touch on tragedy and part of the payment which brought you the envy and admiration of the world. Enough of it, for at seventeen—especially when one is much more like fifteen—there can only be calf-love, after all. Plenty of innocent pleasure and enjoyment in it, and what was to follow had cast no shadow on this schoolboy yet. The girls did look at him suddenly, in their white or blue or pink things, and he had his authentic thrill. Furthermore—as he tells us so often, in his books and speeches and through the mouth of Professor Goodwillie in *The Professor's Love Story*—they held a plebiscite and awarded him first prize for the sweetest smile. Always he adds, and so does the Professor, that from this moment he never really smiled again. It wasn't true, in either case. If he believed it, he was under a most remarkable illusion. But perhaps both characters felt safer in saying so, after a triumph and a tribute like that.

Eighteen now, though, in the reckoning of actual time, and the Dumfries school-days nearly at an end. His "much-loved" brother had married, the year before, the sister of an Edinburgh merchant

(their own sister Mary was to marry his official assistant in the following year), and had moved into a new house. But Jamie was still with him, and he was never too busy to make plans for the next stage in his career. Aberdeen was off now; as, indeed, was the reasonable hope of a bursary anywhere. But with Alick in easier circumstances the choice had widened. What about Edinburgh? Alexander Whyte was well established there, preaching at Free St. George's, and might perhaps keep an occasional eye on a student, too. There was another link of sorts in John Stuart Blackie, who held the chair in Greek, and had recently combined a lecture at the Mechanics' Hall in Dumfries with some very plain words on the minister who had tried to stop the plays. Again, there was Alick's brother-in-law, who didn't only sell silks in Princes Street, but was a very highly-educated man as well, with a house and home where Jamie would always be welcome. Last, if not actually first, there was David Masson—these incessant Davids and Alexanders make a novelist's nightmare, but they have to be faced—Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature, than whom there was no greater at any university in the land. Supposing, then, that Jamie wasn't quite cut out for the Law (which was one idea at this time), or proved not altogether qualified for teaching (which was another); yet supposing that all his reading and writing were really going to lead anywhere, or to be given the best opportunity of doing so—well, Masson, leaving Rhetoric out of it for the moment, was unquestionably the right man.

What did Jamie think of it?

Jamie was silent for a moment, doubtful, and more than a little bewildered. He knew what his age was supposed to be, and he was deeply grateful, for his brother had now even promised to be responsible for his university fees. But quite apart from the fact that McMillan was going to Glasgow, there was the indescribable implication that they all expected him to be grown-up. The games, into which he had put his heart and soul, were over. The last of his contemporaries were leaving. But though a strange confidence in his own powers sometimes almost overwhelmed him, though there were moments when something which he could explain to nobody seemed to be almost bursting inside him, and though he was as determined as ever—somehow, in a very few years—to achieve all that he had ever dreamt, still there was this obstruction of what the world means by education in his path. He owed it to every-

body to face it with courage and to struggle through it with credit. There was no alternative that wouldn't let his brother and his parents down. But if only he could be more like what they had hoped and planned that he should be. Or if only some sudden, romantic miracle could alter his whole appearance and hurl him into the middle of a life of adventure. Writing? Yes, it was in him. He knew that. And if only he could do it in his own way—with a bit of exploring, perhaps, or seafaring at the same time—of course he'd soon show them all. Impatience, again, for the day when he could really begin. Reaction, and a passionate, fruitless longing for the last two years to return. For the clock to stand still, if it couldn't go backwards. Or, once more, to leap forward and put him wherever it was that he belonged. Edinburgh? Examinations? Impossible at one moment, and inevitable at the next. He'd been caught. Yet perhaps if he did grow up a little, or if doing his duty could conceal this failure from those whom he loved—what else, if this was where he found himself, could he possibly try to do?

No choice, then. All that kindness and all that generosity were far too strong for him. One day he would pay them back—here came the dreams again—but meanwhile if the world was like this and he was like that, farewell, on the surface, to boyhood, and forward as his family would have him go.

Yet if there *should* happen to be loopholes or bypaths where part of him could still secretly escape; if he *could* somehow turn this business of growing older into another kind of game; if somehow the feeling of hidden cleverness could only break loose and free him—by diabolical concentration and application, so long as no one else was in command—then (though no one else could understand this) he would do his utmost and sit tight on the safety-valve. No boasting now and no promises until he'd done it. But considerable mystery, henceforward, for the onlookers, as he again set forth on his double if not multiple life.

Wild spirits that summer at Kirriemuir. Days of inexplicable depression. Fishing, walking, writing things which he read to his mother, which puzzled and sometimes rather alarmed her, though she did her best to take them seriously. And then throwing them into a cupboard, and marching away into the glens. Yet of course, she was probably thinking, it would all be different in another four years, when she had two sons who were M.A.s.

Why not three? She thought of little David again, and Jamie

guessed, and would do anything—anything in Heaven or on earth—to get that look off her face. No jealousy. No criticism. He had settled all that years ago, and he could never alter now. Even if he could never be quite like his living brother or the ghost who always haunted her, she must never—whether it were possible or impossible—be disappointed.

## 6

You readers from Oxford or Cambridge—and, if it comes to that, those of you who know Edinburgh University to-day—must throw aside most of your undergraduate memories and impressions if you are to picture the life of a Scottish student over sixty years ago. For to you, it is to be hoped, the very word University implies a rich background of every kind of communal activity; a wide, welcoming threshold to life; a place where you can expand and discover your own individuality if you wish to, but where all the time you are being moulded more or less to an approved and well-established pattern. Something much more elastic than a machine, or than your public school; but still a place and period where ultimate responsibility is spared you. Only by kicking very hard against its gentle pricks can an Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate come through his three or four years without the strings which will bind him both to his Kindly Mother and her other sons.

But now you must forget nearly all that. Whatever the Scotch are like to-day—whether they are actually any softer or are still just as rugged under the surface—sixty years ago they went or were sent to their universities with only one aim in view. They were all more or less hard-up—some of them almost incredibly so—and they were there to get their degree. Neither to them nor to the academic authorities was anything else as important. Through the full Arts Course at least they must struggle—seven subjects to be covered in four long sessions, each lasting from October to April—so that in the end they might be capped by the Vice-Chancellor and sign themselves “M.A.” If they dropped out or failed, or if they couldn’t afford the thirty-five pounds or so on which six months’ board, lodging, and education would just be done, then another family’s ambitions were doomed. The boy who had fought his way thus far was barred from the Ministry, the Law, and anything but the



lower branches of Medicine and Teaching. Let him hide his head, while his relations shook their own. He had disgraced them, for these were the only callings worthy of their sacrifice and pride. That was a grim sort of tight-rope for some of these students, while the east winds whistled among all those grey roofs. A hard school, in both senses, with little enough encouragement for the successful, but no mercy at all for the ones who fell.

Gentler, perhaps, than the Aberdeen of twenty years earlier, where the two Alexanders—Barrie and Whyte—had set forth to conquer their respective worlds. Yet once more, young gentlemen from Oxford and Cambridge, you would have found very little in common with your sheltered and comparatively luxurious lives. No rooms in a college, with scout or gyp—however frowsty or dishonest—to look after you. No dinners at long tables in a rafted hall. No seductive credit from local tradesmen. No gowns, even, to mark your supposed superiority to the same long-suffering class. No prizes or distinctions for those who ran to muscle rather than to brain. No summer term, let alone a summer term with punts and salmon mayonnaise. No decorative yet, in a sense, subtly educational group of rich young colleagues, strolling about in riding-boots or honouring each other with variegated scarves and ties. No sprawling at midnight in the younger dons' arm-chairs. No reading-parties, at so many guineas a week, in picturesque surroundings. And of course—for they hadn't been invented, and if they had been no one could have afforded them—none of your gramophones, or radio-sets, or cars.

In fact, that one, Scotch, long vacation was a necessity for quite a large proportion of undergraduates, in order that they might earn the money which was to keep them during the following session. Some of them went back to work on farms, or in their parents' shops or other businesses. Quite a lot of them could only get through term-time by working for the professors and for some private employer at the same time. Indeed, extreme poverty was so common as hardly to be noticed, as was also true of anything but the extreme eccentricities which it produced in the way of personal appearance or clothing. The whole system, such as it was, dealt with a number of more or less desperately self-centred individuals—each with the fear of failure stalking at his heels—and the kind of corporate life with which we now associate the pursuit of a degree simply didn't exist. There was plenty of time

for it, and there were plenty of undergraduates; but sixty years ago, at any rate, almost their only link was the lecture-room. Outside it they were, for the most part, just a lot of lonely, consecrated lodgers. Their poverty, of course, had a great deal to do with this, but self-sufficiency—real or assumed—has always been a strong, national characteristic. And suspicion is another one; of their fellow-countrymen quite as much as of anyone else.

These look very like generalisations, which are still dangerous even when they are very nearly true. Those students were undoubtedly a queer crowd of educational dervishes, with some genuine hermits amongst them. But they were young—younger by at least two years than the average undergraduate at Oxford or Cambridge—and there is nothing in the air of Edinburgh (except when it paralyses you with cold) to quell the natural spirits at any age. On the contrary, it stimulates, and to the imagination it isn't only the air that does this in a city with such history in its stones. Youth, even when it is poor and believes in the infallibility of examinations, will still break out where it can. It will seek friends and find them, even without salmon mayonnaise. It will be as impudent or mischievous or daring as it knows how. It will play, as elsewhere, and start little clubs and societies so as to make its games look more serious. All this, perhaps, on a pitiable scale, if viewed from Oxford or Cambridge, or from sixty years afterwards. None of it, very likely, worthy of one student to whom games and gangs had lately meant, and would go on meaning, quite so much. Yet even for him, though in his own way he was dedicated as earnestly as any of them, there were times when gaiety and the need for companionship would come bursting through everything, and startle and illuminate those others who were only apparently climbing the same up-hill path.

Barrie—for he was eighteen now, and all undergraduates are men, so that we must no longer write of him as Jamie—matriculated at Edinburgh University at the end of October, 1878. His faithful brother had warned Alexander Whyte, and Whyte, no less reliable, was there to show him by which door to enter and what to do. First sight of the big quadrangle, for there was this much resemblance to an English college, and first qualms—but carefully concealed—at the awesome janitors who guarded it. Then a bit of ritual. And then the future Chancellor emerges again; very small, very thin, exceedingly solemn and reserved; but a member of the

University at last. No longer, fatally and officially by what has just happened to him, a schoolboy. Wondering if other people already notice the difference. Experimenting, with deep interest, as to how far he feels the difference himself.

Is he grown-up now, he wonders? It is going to let himself and everyone else down if he isn't, or if he can't manage it pretty quickly now. So if he strikes some kind of secret bargain; if he sets his teeth and sits tight on the thoughts and impulses which put him in such danger of being always unlike others, can that conceivably do the trick?

Or is this more guess-work? Perhaps there were no such conscious thoughts, and the terms that were made sprang simply from qualities that were beyond even his control. Yet some things are certain. The four student years on which he was now entering, for all their merrier moments and all their lack of academic distinction, were years of recurrent suppression and strain. All too often, and especially at first, he was solitary, baffled, out of his element; and again—though he told no one, for in any case he had taken this vow—there was something that entered into his soul and remained there. Long afterwards, when he seemed so far from such growing-pains himself, it gave him an immense tolerance and understanding for all young creatures who beat their half-fledged wings. He could console them with wisdom and experience—actually startling them sometimes in their youthful selfishness by the depth and penetration of his sympathy. But few if any of them had been through his own wilderness, for no one, at any age, was ever quite like J.M.B.

Long afterwards, also, in a speech made in his Chancellor's robes—playing once more with all his skill on an audience which expected the well-known touches of sentiment—he referred to the "walls one loves when one has done with them." The audience leant forward, nodded, murmured, felt the touch as the weary tones passed on to the next, telling point; a joke, of course, this time. But when the words are printed, and we can pause over them, there seems to be an almost scrupulous omission of the statement that he loved the walls of Edinburgh while he was there. One can believe that they must often have been far too much like the walls of a prison.

More words from the same Chancellor at his installation. October, 1930. Speaking of the changes which had taken place in fifty years. "Unions and hostels, such as, alas, were not in my time, now

give Edinburgh students that social atmosphere which seemed in the old days to be the one thing lacking; the absence of them maimed some of us for life." Then on, instantly, to some statistics and another characteristic joke. But he was thinking of himself—and not with undue self-pity, for that was never his way—when he spoke of being maimed. True that by this time, through the family of boys whose guardianship he had assumed, he had come pretty close to first-hand knowledge of the "social atmosphere" at their twentieth-century English colleges. He didn't exactly envy them, either, for by this time he was as genuinely proud of his old University as he was clearly aware what it had contributed to his character. But he was telling the truth. Those four sessions had been hard and all too often desperately lonely. They had given him much, but he had been robbed at the same time. The Barrie who went on to the next stage, which was hard and for a while lonely enough too—but he had set sail, and was master of his own craft now—bore scars which he would feel for the rest of his life. Part of the price, no doubt, by which he and the world were to profit. Yet of course—though this is of little interest to the world—the growth of its men of genius is always at the expense of something which they have missed or lost.

Outwardly, however, or objectively, young Barrie was now just a small, thin student—though always with those remarkably beautiful clear-blue eyes—following the normal and conventional routine. For those who know their Edinburgh, or for those who like lists of addresses, there is evidence, mingled with tradition, that he lodged at different times in Cumberland Street, Frederick Street, Great King Street, and Shandwick Place—all of which, like the University itself, were in the northern part of the city known as the New Town. Hence he would set forth to attend the lectures on the seven subjects, by the seven appropriate professors whom he sketched—but not until six years after he had left them—in the pages of *An Edinburgh Eleven*. Hither he returned to study his notes, or to try and interpret the self-taught shorthand which he never really mastered; for, as at other seats of learning then and perhaps still, the main difference from instruction at school was that the preceptors more or less dictated what was already available in a number of printed books. In the afternoons, when these labours allowed, he walked; prodigiously, as always. On Sundays—the grim, grey, forbidding Edinburgh Sundays—he regularly attended

the services either at Free St. George's (Dr. Whyte) or Free High (Dr. Walter C. Smith), and as regularly and according to custom put a penny in the plate.

No straying from these two folds, though Edinburgh was even fuller of alternatives than Kirriemuir. As with scores of other young Scotchmen if not with all of them, his family's form of religion had been driven in so far and so firmly that questioning and experiment were equally impossible. Church-going was as inevitable as Sunday itself. Other denominations were, quite simply, for those who had been brought up in them. More imprisonment? His soul hadn't noticed it yet, or rather, perhaps, had accepted obedience to what was expected of it without positively involving his mind. His church-going broke off and ceased when he left Scotland—though it was resumed, as long as his mother was alive, at his old home—as naturally and easily as if it had never been driven into him at all. He never mocked; the moral principles which it formalised or ritualised were an unshakable part of him until the end. But, put to the test, the perpetuation of childish beliefs—which bring peace, comfort, and self-satisfaction to so many—could no longer accompany the queer development of his intellect. In this, at any rate, he grew up, or—if you prefer it—remained always too young for spiritual understanding. During all the best-known part of his life he varied, one might say, between stoic philosophy and brief but natural and human moments of secret panic and terror. His mind wasn't a religious mind, though his pen and that largely subconscious part of him which so often guided it could touch notes of deep religious sincerity.

Yet on those same Sundays he not only, oftener than not, attended two services—as would be expected of all but those openly treading the road to destruction—but, at any rate for a considerable period, was a pupil at two Bible classes as well. That makes a fairly full day of rest, and somehow, when one thinks of him afterwards, one cannot help wondering why he did it. We mustn't mock, either; yet it is quite positive—if, indeed, it isn't obvious—that when, towards the end of his life, he decided to write a Biblical drama, very little of his regular instruction had left any mark. Perhaps, then, it was to please his family. Perhaps it was part of the self-discipline—often so tremendous yet often, again, so fitful during these early years—which was intended to alter him somehow; and may have, though never quite as his complex simplicity had planned.

Or perhaps it was loneliness once more which made him seek company even at Bible classes—where it is practically impossible to imagine him as a genuinely hungry sheep—rather than sit by himself in his lodgings; puzzling, worrying, and fighting or yielding to the bouts of depression which nothing, after his schooldays, could ever permanently beat off.

This is a sorry picture; yet of course bouts of depression—though few can have been blacker—come to thousands at this age, and it is hardly fair to bring in the still unknown future as well. No doubt there was reaction, quite possibly by Monday morning, and if we feel pity—which we are bound to feel so often in the midst of admiration, irritation, affection, and amazement—this is also a case where circumstances could easily have been much worse.

There were the loneliness and the depression, and by this time he had also started the headaches; but he still had a happy home, with letters constantly speeding to and fro, and long months to be spent there in the summer. There was that second hospitable and devoted background in his brother's house at Dumfries. And though plenty of other students were so poor as to be on the verge of rags and starvation, young Barrie was never actually in the slightest danger of touching these depths.

Of course it was a life of frugality and economy—almost Spartan, if you like, by modern standards—but to both of these he was well used; and there was no sudden, glaring contrast in his Edinburgh surroundings to make them seem harder than before. He never had to share a bed or live on a sack of potatoes, he could afford books, newspapers, and the theatre, if he were careful, and it hardly sounds like acute penury when we hear of his telegraphing to a Dumfries tailor about the fit of his clothes. In latter phases he was like other successful men in at least not discouraging a legend of early privations. He was proud, like other Scotsmen, of all the struggling students who did pull in their belts to expand their minds; and if anyone cared to identify him with them, he certainly wouldn't go out of his way to correct this creditable illusion. But again we are not mocking. Success, for one thing, is almost bound to produce this result; the contrast was undoubtedly there by that time, and it was his business, for which the world had paid him, to tell any story as effectively and convincingly as he could. No harm was done. No harm is done now if we attempt a little more

accuracy. What happened afterwards is just as remarkable as before.

The seven subjects which stood between Barrie and his degree are listed, each with an article on its exponent, in the chapters of *An Edinburgh Eleven*. At all these exponents—but he was quite safe from any possibility of reprisals by that time, and well away on the road to wealth and fame—he pokes a more or less impudent finger of fun. He was a journalist now, with a witty and often reckless pen; wagging his head as another quip came to him, and seeing the whole scene half as a disrespectful undergraduate, half as a kind of puckish truant who has found a pleasanter perch elsewhere. Precious little reverence for scholarship in these pages. An almost incredible composition from a future Chancellor. Save for the signs of technical proficiency—which had come to him by immense pains, yet in another sense never gave him any real trouble at all—the whole thing is much more what you would expect from an actual student.

But when he was an actual student, the bubble and sparkle were still awaiting their release. It was care, rather, that weighed on him as he slowly felt his way. The professors awed him, still not for their learning, but because of the keys which they held. The whole seven must be satisfied before he could be freed, and the itch to write—now welling up again, as the new life became less strange—was a long way from turning itself to light-hearted personalities at their expense. Their classes came first still, and all those volumes of long, carefully-copied notes. Some have survived, and again—unless we are educational zealots—there is a faint sense of pity, or of waste, when we come, for example, on pages of chemical formulæ in a handwriting which hasn't yet cracked under the strain of anything up to ten or a dozen newspaper articles a week.

Yet just as, for some reason, we are on the brink of sighing, a chuckle catches us instead. This note-book, we suddenly realise, has been plundered for the scientific jargon in *The Professor's Love Story*. The author, if he understood what he was taking down at the time, had certainly forgotten it all as soon as he was declared proficient. But it wasn't exactly wasted. And so, of course, with much else in a mind always so full of pigeon-holes. Never a humanist in the Academic sense—Greek and Latin were soon little more than a matter of useful or surprising tags, Moral Philosophy or Logic and Metaphysics were never more than so much

phraseology to be rammed in and then discharged—but in the other sense able to imbibe and make use of anything. A master always of mugging up, of jettisoning everything that had served its immediate purpose, of retaining a strange, often almost irrelevant residue for bewilderment or entertainment when the right moment came.

As for his mathematics—the sixth subject—perhaps it is a comfort to some of us, or perhaps we should resist another dangerous example, but how on earth he ever managed to satisfy Professor Chrystal (and once, at least, to gain a certificate with honours) will probably never be known. Figures, algebraical symbols and the line AB had meant practically nothing to him at school, and he never went near them if he could avoid it during the whole of his subsequent career. He regarded them with the sincerest horror and loathing. But again, one can only suppose, the mugging achieved its purpose, and somehow, even in these terrible examinations, it managed to pull him through.

So to the last, or first, of the subjects, and Professor David Masson. Rhetoric, you remember, and English Literature. One of the main reasons, it has always and probably rightly been assumed, why his brother had chosen Edinburgh for him at all. Masson comes second only to Lord Rosebery (with whom, of course, there was no competition) in *An Edinburgh Eleven*, and the author's respect for him is, to say the least of it, touched on lightly. But it was there, and this position is no matter of chance. Masson was a big man in his day, a real force in literary criticism, a great moralist, a remarkably dull stylist, and a genuine influence on the young Barrie who sat at his feet. Yes, that stands; for Masson, there can be no doubt, could make literature seem both dignified and glorious. He treated it—and this is a strong statement in Scotland—almost as a religion. R.L.S. thought him pompous and reactionary—but just glance at *An Edinburgh Eleven* again, if you want to see what Barrie, even in 1889, still thought of R.L.S.

What is more, this Masson not only forgave the flippancy with which he himself was described, but became and remained one of Barrie's greatest admirers until the day—in 1907—of his death. They kept up a correspondence until the end. Letters in which nothing is lacking, from either writer, of affection and mutual pride. Yet before we allow ourselves to be altogether carried away—

Well, there it is again. The obvious, the typically biographical



statement and deduction to make is that it was from Masson that Barrie learnt of style and expression, that it was in his class-room that he came to know and love the great masters who were his models, and that it was Masson's close and perceptive guidance which drew and urged him forward until he was an adept in his art. But it wasn't so. There is hardly a word of truth in this. Masson influenced him, and powerfully, to the extent that an impressive personality confirmed the belief that writing was the finest game in the world. But, this having been established, his small, thin pupil treated the actual classes with little more deference than the rest. He made his notes, he mugged them up, and bluffed his way through the examinations. But his thoughts, during those classes, were far more on the peculiarities of the other students or on the Professor's interesting gesticulations. His reading, for far the greater part of the session, was still in any travel or adventure story, or any romantic or blood-and-thunder newspaper serial, that he could get hold of. The great masters were examination-fodder, and one has an idea that half the point for him of these distracting tests was to write just what was expected without reading them at all. The gaps in his knowledge of English literature continued to astonish those who suddenly learnt of them until the last. And of course they never would have learnt of them, if he had felt the slightest self-consciousness in announcing that he had just discovered some book or author that even a dabbler in the classics would at least pretend that he had read. Perhaps this was rather fun for him; to meet so many other people's old friends by belated accident or choice. But although light literature sixty years ago wasn't nearly as light as it is now, and although he was always glad to include Scott or Dumas, one quite sees why Masson—for all his physical and mental resemblance to a prophet—didn't exactly spot this winner in advance.

Second to Masson—but only, perhaps, because he taught Greek instead of English—comes the spirited John Stuart Blackie, with his plaid and great staff; still cutting and thrusting at everything which he regarded as humbug, either in scholarship or the conduct of Modern Athenian life. A rough wind blowing through the University; yet because he was a distinguished professor, with just that unfair advantage that goes with despotic power. You remember how he crumpled up that absent clergyman at Dumfries? This was work with a bludgeon rather than a rapier, but admittedly it showed no symptom of a crabbed or dusty mind. Blackie, who had resigned

when it was published—"and was now devoting his time to writing sonnets to himself in the Scotch newspapers"—makes a whirlwind appearance in *Better Dead*, which came out fourteen months before *An Edinburgh Eleven*. Again the pupil is making fun of him, but again there are affection and admiration as well. Only the Victorian era, with its extremes of old-fashioned liberalism and a so much darker background, could produce these tremendous, blustering personalities at its seats of learning. So far, in Blackie's case, as such qualities were devoted to the cause of Hellenism, they had very little effect on young Barrie; while so far as they led him to expound the benefits of exercise and visits to the pantomime, he was in this instance, of course, preaching to the converted. Blackie, however, was also sociable and hospitable both by preference and on principle. He would get a good mark, if he deserved it for nothing else, as host to hundreds of awkward and lonely students at his breakfasts and suppers. Barrie was among them, wondering sometimes, as he eyed his fellow-guests, whether all had been chosen for their shortcomings and defects. But he was grateful, then and afterwards, to the professor who realised that the young have other needs as well as the acquisition of his special knowledge.

Was it at Blackie's, or, as an immediate predecessor has suggested, at Hutchison Stirling's—the Hegelian doctor, not yet Gifford lecturer, who also gave these simple but essential entertainments—that he learnt the snatches of students' songs which he occasionally and quite tunelessly struck up? It is all so far away, and so long ago. It has all gone, and we can never hope to reach or reproduce it. The small, thin, moody, anxious undergraduate appears, and vanishes, and is half-glimpsed again. Sometimes it seems that he is happier, or even happy; but this is still mostly at home, or with his brother—and two little nieces now—at Dumfries. We lose him, or what we see is only any wondering, wandering spirit at that age. Yet of course there is adjustment, by suffering and laughter as well, as he toils and idles through 1879. Sometimes, we know without being told, he feels such inward brilliance that it almost scares him. Or again he thinks of Alick and the prize pupils among his contemporaries, and hope flickers to a mere pin-point of flame. Sometimes, with the aid of reading and that vivid imagination, he has escaped altogether, and is again half a schoolboy and half a roystering adventurer. He has grown, he is bronzed and muscular, and there is at least one heroine to look up at him now in each of these

dreams. For he needs her, and would know just how to treat her, if only—the dream starts fading—those pretty faces which he never fails to notice would ever notice him in return.

But what can he offer them—though once, he says, he posted a poem (and never was there a worse poet) to a girl in Kirriemuir—as reality and the class-rooms again block the horizon? He has got to get on somehow, and then it will all come. Away with weakness. Concentrate. He hurls his heroine away, for first and always there is the old, the never-forgotten promise to himself and his mother.

It must be kept, it is going to be kept, and more and more he knows that the only way is by writing. So he writes, with little skill yet and to the neglect of his note-books. The waste-paper basket yawns; at first, though all these labours are interwoven from the outset with ambition, he has hardly the faintest notion how they can be transmuted even into silver—let alone into gold. Yet there is the rule for all of us that whatever we really want must, if we want it hard enough, come in the guise of opportunity. Or there is no need, in this instance, to be mystical about it. Ink always calls unto ink. The student's ears would be open whenever and wherever it was discussed; automatically, almost, those sharing this interest would be drawn together. That isn't all. There is an Edinburgh editor who actually hails from Kirriemuir. The student is lying in wait for him, perhaps with a bit of manuscript as bait. The editor warns, discourages, and quite suddenly exhibits deplorable yet inevitable compassion. He can't promise anything—he is still emphatically insistent on this point—but if the student cares to come round to his office to-morrow, it's just possible that . . .

The student is there. Punctual, dogged, irresistible somehow in spite of his size. He goes down the stairs—and, Heaven help us, this is still how so many of our painstaking masterpieces are judged—with a bundle of new books for review. His foot, one might say, is now in the crack of the door; and that isn't all in this case. By the middle of his second year, when he was still under twenty, young Barrie wasn't only reviewing for the *Edinburgh Courier*—for just enough payment to qualify as a professional also—but (Heaven help the other branch of his calling) had begun doing dramatic criticism for them as well. A plum, whatever the paltry profit. He was the Press, with its thunderbolts in his grasp. No more struggling at the

Pit doors—except still when a colleague had got hold of the complimentary ticket first—but free admission to the best part of the house. The fate of the piece and its actors in his hands. Glancing at his large silver watch—for the note-books must also be studied later on—muttering merciless phrases, playing a part himself on his own side of the footlights. Happy enough, we should say, at these moments, and playing it far too enthusiastically to trouble because the London critics had all anticipated him months if not years before. Hats off to the *Edinburgh Courier*—or to its ghost, rather, for it has long since faded away. As for the actors, well, their occupation is always a risky one, and some of them wouldn't lose through this particular, nineteen-year-old critic in the end.

Far away from out of the past, left behind in a drawer at Strath View, sent up to London with other possessions, waiting finally in the wooden box which was the owner's only luggage when he first left Scotland himself, there comes a small, leather-bound volume, girdled with elastic webbing in which the rubber has perished many winters ago. Very much the air of a gift. Its title—*Campbell's Victoria Diary and Almanac for 1880*. Its prefatory matter informative, but distinctly out of date. Next, as always, a couple of blank pages headed "Memoranda." And then the owner's pencilled entries which—this just shows his determination—actually continue as far as Monday, May 17th. They are brief, and become briefer as they go on, but on each opening the publisher—instead, as they so often do, of ramming Saturday and Sunday together—has solved the problem of two into seven by adding a space for "Remarks on the Week." Here follow extracts, with the minimum of *apparatus criticus* in square brackets, beginning during the short, new-year's holiday at Kirriemuir.

### January

*Thurs 1.* Asked to Mills, didn't go, headache, dancing at home at night. Essay. *Query.* Why do people humbug me by asking me out to tea? [Mills we may assume to be the Kirriemuir printer and bookseller, in whose house the diarist saw his first puppet-show.]

*Sat 3.* Dr. Murray arrived. Finished Essay. [Dr. William Murray—a physician this time, not a theologian—married Isabella Barrie at the end of this year.]

*Remarks on the Week.* Tay Bridge disastour (*sic*) makes every-

thing gloomy. [This had taken place on December 28th, 1879, with the loss of about seventy lives.]

*Sun 4.* Walked to Pluckerstone with Dr. Murray &c. [Very short walk, this. Barely four miles there and back.]

*Mon 5.* Returned to Edinr.

*Tues 6.* 9 bks from Courant for reviewing. [One of Barrie's stories was that his early reviewing was done on the understanding that he never cut the leaves. Belief in this statement is optional.]

*Remarks on the Week.* Grind, grind, grind!

*Sun 11.* Elijah & other poems.

*Mon 12—Thurs 15.* Grind.

*Sat 17.* Gave in reviews. Offered Circus. No. Deb. Society. [The critic apparently has his professional pride. The Debating Society was the Edinburgh University Dumfriesshire and Galloway Literary Society—"the smallest in the University and the largest-minded"—limited to students from those districts. Debates were held and critical essays read and discussed every Saturday between November and March, and Barrie took a considerable share in both activities.]

*Remarks on the Week.* "Something attempted, something done."

*Sun 18.* St. George's & Prof. Calderwood. [Professor Henry Calderwood—recreations: walking and angling—held the Chair of Moral Philosophy, and has his chapter in *An Edinburgh Eleven*.]

*Mon 19 and Tues 20.* Grind.

*Wed 21.* Math exam. Letter from Kate Sullivan. [One can only theorise about Kate Sullivan's identity; but it seems well within the bounds of possibility that he had extracted a communication from an actress.]

*Thurs 22.* Grind.

*Sat 24.* Essay at D. & G. L. A. [See January 17th.]

*Remarks on the Week.* Satisfactory.

*Sun 25.* St. George's & Free High.

*Mon 26.* Did *Robinson Crusoe* at the Princess. Miss Braddon's new novel in 3 vols. [Miss Braddon's first novel this year was called *Just As I Am*.]

*Tues 27.* A blank.

*Sat 31.* Craigmillar. Deb. Soc. [Craigmillar, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, was presumably the destination of a walk.]

*Remarks on the Week.* As before.

*February*

*Sun 1.* St. George's. Walk.

*Mon 2.* Letter from Sara (particular). [Sara was his sister.]

*Tue 3.* Work, work, work. Headache.

*Wed 4.* New Coat. Headache. Adam blackened his face for our amusement. [If Adam—a fellow-student—hoped to amuse Barrie (and Barrie with a headache) in this painstaking manner, he was taking rather a desperate chance. J.M.B. never liked it when other people were funny, appearing to detect the implication—which would have been a very false one—that he couldn't be much funnier himself.]

*Thurs 5.* Headache, slight.

*Fri 6.* Dfs. Castlebank at night. [In other words the beginning of another week-end with his brother at Dumfries—though Castlebank was a friend's house. Seventy-five miles from Edinburgh, but he could afford to make the journey over and over again.]

*Sat 7.* Walk with Maggie. [His younger sister.]

*Remarks on the Week.* Humbug with remarks on the week.

*Sun 8.* Walk with Maggie.

*Mon 9.* Holiday. Back from Dfs.

*Wed 11 and Thurs 12.* Grind.

*Fri 13.* Mitchell. [There is a walk with Mitchell nearly every Friday, and it was he who presently became an artist, and drew the cover for *Better Dead.*]

*Sat 14.* Wearisome.

*Remarks on the Week.* See last week.

*Sun 15.* St. George's. Walk round Salisbury Crags.

*Mon 16—Thurs 19.* Grind.

*Fri 20.* Ours at the Theatre Royal.

*Sat 21.* Did *Les Cloches de Corneville* at the Princess Theatre. Naughty but nice. [!].

*Remarks on the Week.* The end of the Session in the dim distance, no bigger than a man's hand.

*Sun 22.* St. George's & Free High.

*Mon 23.* Did *Leap Year* at the Royal.

*Tues 24—Thurs 26.* Pursued the even tenour of my way.

*Remarks on the Week.* Humbug.

*Sun 29.* St. George's. Montpellier at dinner. [No. 2, Montpellier,

in Edinburgh, was the home of Alick Barrie's silk-mercer brother-in-law, William Cowan.]

*March.*

*Mon 1.* Did *Arrah na Pogue* at the Princess Theatre.

*Tues 2.* Mrs. Martin ill. Hunting up her people "in the dead of night". [The commentator has to guess here. Mrs. Martin may have been his landlady at the time, but there is no doubt that at any crisis Barrie was always the one to dash in and help. This habit was so steadfast that distracted and deeply grateful friends sometimes almost laughed at his devoted punctuality. Yet there were few others to earn this natural and genuine tribute.]

*Wed 5.* Exam in Math.

*Thurs 4.* Exam in Latin.

*Sat 6.* D. & G.L.S.

*Remarks on the Week.* Rot.

*Sun 7.* St. George's.

*Mon 8—Thurs 11.* Grind.

*Remarks on the Week.* One week nearer home.

*Sun 14.* Headache.

*Tues 16 and Wed 17.* Grind.

*Thurs 18.* Carl Rosa Opera. *Mignon*. [Was he there as a critic?

Hardly any power on earth could have dragged him to an opera in later life. Music, of almost any description, tormented him with boredom. But of course, as other critics will testify, that isn't the point; and Opera, at any rate, was much more like a play than the Circus.]

*Sat 20.* *Carmen*.

*Remarks on the Week.* Will "the weather is good" do?

*Sun 21.* Free High.

*Mon 22.* *Smith and Jilted* at Princess.

*Wed 24.* D. & G.L.S. Supper. [An annual affair, marking the end of the society's season.]

*Thurs 25.* *Pinafore*. [H.M.S. Pinafore was two years old.]

*Fri 26 and Sat 27.* Unwell.

*Remarks on the Week.* [There is only a faint, wavy line this week.]

*Sun 28.* Very unwell.

*Mon 29.* A little better. Saw Dr. Bell. *Betsy* at the Princess.

[One would like this to be Dr. Joseph Bell, who so largely

inspired the creation of Sherlock Holmes; and it almost certainly was.]

*Tues 30.* Good deal better.

*Wed 31.* Worse again.

*April.*

*Thurs 1.* No better.

*Fri 2.* Sara and Bella here. [His two sisters. Bella=Isabella.]

*Remarks on the Week.* Elections. [General Election. The Liberal victory when Gladstone was returned for Mid-Lothian.]

*Sun 4.* Craignillar.

*Mon 5.* Grind.

*Wed 7.* Elections excitement.

*Thurs 8.* do.

*Fri 9.* Close of Session. Honours in Math.

*Sat 10.* Exam for M.A. (classics). [Quite possibly the Final already, as the subjects could be taken in any order.]

*Remarks on the Week.* The end at last.

*Mon 12.* Exam M.A. Down to Dfs. [Dumfries.]

*Tues 13.* Not very bright.

*Thurs 15.* Off to Gatehouse—Fishing.

*Remarks on the week.* Fa la la.

*Sun 18.* Church. Wedd. [Wedd=Wellwood Anderson, the old school-friend actor and editor, and son of the Dumfries book-seller.]

*Mon 19.* Solitary.

*Thurs 22.* F. C. Manse, Maxwelltown—Concert. [Duty.]

*Remarks on the Week.* Got news on Tuesday that had passed M.A. (Classics).

*Mon 26.* Philarmonic (*sic*) Society. [Wait a moment.]

*Tues 27.* Wrote article on above for Herald. [*The Dumfries Courier and Herald.*]

*Thurs 29.* Quite alone.

*Remarks on the Week.* [This space is blank from now on.]

*May.*

*Mon 3.* Pinafore.

*Wed 5—Fri 7.* Stranraer.

*Sat 8.* Ireland. Ballycastle (*sic*).

*Sun 9.* Giants Causeway. Birthday.

*Mon 10.* Belfast.



*Tues 11.* Stranraer.

*Fri 14.* Dfs.

*Sun 16.* Meditation.

*Mon 17.* Jane Ann arrived.

And thus the entries break off, except that written across a page for accounts at the end of the book are the significant words "Mr. Gowans, Sub-Editor." With the arrival of his eldest unmarried sister—whom one is glad to find escaping, even for a short while, from her bondage at home—the diary goes the way of so many diaries at that age. Yet it shows us something between its few, short lines. A young man whose health isn't any too good; who is suspicious and intolerant of what (like Professor Blackie) he calls humbug—either in others or himself; who works hard, but not incessantly; who has a strong feeling for his family; who finds *Les Cloches de Corneville* naughty but nice (this entry has been rubbed out, and written in again); and is still, in his second undergraduate year and with a finger in the Press, enough of a school-boy to count the days to the beginning of the holidays. We note, also, that short trip to Northern Ireland, again indicating the absence of anything like oppressive poverty in his own circle and surroundings. And then this little gleam from the past—the only record even faintly resembling a personal journal which he is known to have kept—fades out; leaving us to piece together the rest of his time at Edinburgh from such fragments as can be found elsewhere.

They were years, inevitably, of development, but of little outward change. Of further acclimatisation up to a point, but never of absorption by the grey walls. Quite a number of friends now—it would be easy, if unilluminating, to give a longish list of surnames from the Diary and elsewhere—but none like James McMillan. No Jonathan at Edinburgh, so that afterwards it was hardly more than "I wonder what has happened to So-and-so," or even less than that. Still working, still reviewing and writing theatrical notices. Still some obstruction, from within as well as from without, in the further advancement of his pen. Editors, then as now, always want fresh contributions to be just like what they are printing already. Beginners believe them, study to imitate, and if their minds are persistently unusual, produce material which is neither one thing nor the other. All part of the lesson, of course, yet no one can ever master the mystery from rejection slips. There

must, somehow, be readers, however silent or apparently unappreciative, if we are ever to learn this strange job. But Barrie, except as a critic, was still plunging up literary blind-alleys, and still quite unaware of the wide gateway so near at hand.

He wrote at least one play, too. *Bohemia*, with one of its scenes laid in "A Glade in Brighton." Ambition still hopelessly beaten by inexperience, and the arduous effort to please others rather than himself. His irregular complimentary tickets led—with a thrill that cannot altogether have been concealed—to some of the freedom of the stage-door, and of course actors have always been more than willing to give anybody technical tips. But they were no help in this case. *Bohemia*, and perhaps others, joined the pile of unwanted manuscripts, and having served its subtle purpose was forgotten.

What else in the last two undergraduate years?

Family affairs. Another discovery, as his two little Dumfries nieces—there were to be four eventually, and two nephews as well—developed a consciousness of his existence. Here, in his brother's house, was an audience that he could play on almost as he chose. To whom he could repeat and make up stories, exhibit his sleight of hand, or display that other gift—irresistible to all in their infancy—of alternately raising one eyebrow and lowering the other. Never before had there been little girls with whom he could play quite like this; and if afterwards it fell out that little boys had most of the luck, or if, because of cricket and fishing, they were almost bound to have had more of it anyhow, his nieces would always remember the fascinating young uncle who sprawled on a sofa, or lay on the ground with them out of doors, amusing them and making them laugh. Nor has one of them—the eldest—though she can have been barely more than three at the time, forgotten the impressive manner in which he pointed out the venerable and alarming figure of Thomas Carlyle. Envidable little girls, the first of so many to be envied. And quite impossible to exaggerate here, for never was there such a playfellow for children.

It did him good, too. Of course it did, unless we are still to try and force him into the pattern of other men. It was a relief and a release from the strain of trying to grow up, and from all those days when he had written "Grind, grind, grind." For the children weren't puzzled by him, and while he was playing with them he was no longer puzzled by himself. So different in Edinburgh. While even in his real home there was still, together with

love and the strongest loyalty, a background of anxiety and doubt. He was so queer and unlike them all, his moods were so unaccountable, he seemed to be working hard enough but it was no use pretending that he could ever be another Alick. All that writing—to what in the way of self-respecting independence could it possibly lead? That craze for the theatre, that alarming moment when he had given an imitation of an actor called Iving—wasn't all this sort of thing bound to lead to disappointment and danger?

David Barrie—sixty-five or so now, still fixed in all his old principles—was never unjust and always patient, but he could hardly conceal his obvious misgivings. Jane Ann admired and trusted, but knew well enough—perhaps better than the truth—that oddness and impudence were risky qualities on which to build a career. The other two unmarried sisters—Sara, six years older, and Maggie, three years younger—shared in the admiration, absorbed some of the anxiety, but at this stage had careers and responsibilities of their own. A bit of luck for all concerned had brought them posts at a girls' school also in Edinburgh. Kirriemuir to the rescue sometimes for Jamie now, and Jamie ready enough to call on them and keep them entertained.

His mother? Again, inevitably, we think of that distressingly human and inhuman book. Yet again, now that all the characters in *Margaret Ogilvy* have passed away, it is impossible not to interpret it without some of its glamour. Never, perhaps, has an author been more convinced that he was sincere, or at the same time tried harder to make us accept a portrait. Yet the simple, pious, self-centred woman whom he placed so doggedly on a pedestal must—despite the charm which undoubtedly accompanied these qualities—have been as far from really understanding him as anyone on earth.

Not, Heaven knows, that anyone—from Barrie himself downwards—could hope to achieve such a miracle as this. But all he knew of her and all he tells us of her show her constant mistrust of Literature as a profession, and—even after the money had begun rolling in—her profound conviction that his luck couldn't possibly last. She saw that he was different, but it alarmed her. She accepted his devotion and all that eventually came with it, but her own attitude remained just as unalterably fixed. Alick was the model. Little David would have been another and perhaps an even more gifted and successful Alick. But Jamie, with his fancies and moods, his

strange enthusiasms, and his reckless regard for steadiness and security, was something that she had never expected and to which she could never really adjust herself.

Pride came towards the end—to be hidden, of course, as far as possible—and no doubt at all stages his efforts could tick her into a laugh. No doubt, also, he could lead her—as he could have led almost anyone—a long way into his hopes and dreams. But she followed reluctantly, with Scottish caution and orthodoxy always tugging at her skirts. If she found that she had encouraged him, the next phase was always compunction and an attempt to draw back. She was frightened, she reproached herself, but she felt that he had tricked her again. All this is there in *Margaret Ogilvy*, together—sometimes not even by implication—with the deeply affectionate cunning that ultimately always bent her to its will. But in these Edinburgh days, with nothing but faith and determination to back it—and the strength of these often flickering from week to week—she cannot be said to have offered any real encouragement at all. Rather the opposite, whenever she had the chance. Yet faith and determination are never perhaps the worse for not being appreciated at home. If there is anything in them, here is a fairly useful and continual test. Besides, her youngest son had promised her something years ago, and neither she nor he was going to be let off.

In 1881 there was a mild academical distinction—a prize in the shape of a book on Metaphysics—and about this time, also, another hero appeared. The first man of action, in the form of Joseph Thomson—who provides the ninth chapter in *An Edinburgh Eleven*. A genuine and more than gallant explorer, and already author of a volume of Central African travels, though still only a couple of years older than Barrie himself. Another real thrill when this meeting took place; an outpouring of the lavish and unquestioning admiration which was always ready for the members of his private Pantheon. Any explorer had a strong chance of entering it, and quite a number of them did; while close students of his earlier writings will notice explorers cropping up again and again. Even oftener than barbers, who for some reason—there must have been one whom he disliked—are always represented as weaklings or rascals. In *Walker, London*, we are introduced to both.

Thomson became and—subject to frequent absences in various parts of Africa—remained a friend until his early death, worn out

by his own energy and exertions, in 1895. Like Barrie he was a tremendous walker—on one occasion he beat the Carlisle record handsomely by walking seventy miles to Edinburgh and immediately going round an exhibition there for another two hours; like Barrie he was a boy in spirit; and again, not unlike Barrie perhaps, he was far easier in the society of women than of men. More than once he struck terror into Margaret Ogilvy, though, by at least toying with the notion that her son should go off exploring with him too. And indeed it wasn't the son's fault—for he was yearning to write a book of travel himself—that this never took place. Later on he was one of the first members of his idolator's peculiar cricket-teams, and has been credited, no doubt correctly, with inspiring their eventually well-known name. For years, in fact, whenever Thomson was in England, there would always be letters and meetings and talks.

Yet through the whole of this period one can also see him, with a little imagination, suffering slightly from the position in which he found himself; alternately trying to accept and to avoid it; not altogether fancying the incense, yet touched at the same time that he was made uncomfortable. No easy job to occupy one of those niches, flattering as it could so often be. Poor Thomson? Lucky Thomson? Or both at once? But of course he had a real existence—crowded or perilous and adventurous weeks and months of it—quite apart from another man's dreams. Strange, though, if it were love of the unusual that took him into the heart of Africa, that he should have met almost the oddest of all his experiences so near home.

Thus, back in time again, to the hero-worshipper's last undergraduate year; still working for his final certificates and the *Courant*, still getting very little change out of other editors, still gazing towards loftier literary projects which he hadn't yet discovered to be beyond his range. Always just a little spoilt at home and in Dumfries, but by this time practised in hiding vulnerable sensibilities in Edinburgh. Nothing odd there, of course, in ambition or in doing two tasks at once. Nobody thought him exceptional or remarkable, and there wasn't the least danger to him yet from over-praise. Rather, if anything, from its absence.

Twenty-one. Rising, as they say, twenty-two. Deeply versed in *Roger's Thesaurus*—which never left him as long as he wrote—and pretty knowledgeable by this time in proof-correction and,

perhaps no less important, the number of words that go to a column or page. Full of ideas that didn't fit his powers, and of an increasing facility that so seldom seemed to fit the ideas. Trained already, in a sense, for the moment when destiny should show him the right road; but still blind to it, as pertinacity still struggled with melancholy, and plungings into boyishness, and secret doubts. Best, as one might imagine, in English Literature, but never at the head of his class. A shot at a scholarship on this subject, and a tribute of approval from the examiners; but somebody else carried it off.

1882. The last lap. Still as short and slight as ever—hardly more than five-foot-one, and never to be any taller—with a small moustache now, which was to grow until it drooped and then recede again in middle age, and a protective mask against bores and inquisitors which was soon to be accepted as his celebrated shyness. Longing for the next phase, but still looking forward to it with uncertainty and through a thick mist. Conscious of his family's expectations, and most positively of his own. Conscious of his gifts, too, yet also of obstruction and frustration on all sides. The straight, strange, inevitable path blocked by no more than a necessary interval of time, but agonisingly invisible for all that.

A day which was at least proof to himself and others that in one, stubborn respect he hadn't failed. April 21st, 1882. Just two and a half weeks before his twenty-second birthday. He passes into the Synod Hall, and awaits the Vice-Chancellor's ceremonial entrance. He has hired the requisite academical outfit for this great occasion—will dash off, as soon as it is over, to be photographed, so that the record may not only be on parchment—and distant radiations of pride from father, mother, brother, and sisters accompany him as at last he steps forward to be capped.

He is no longer James M. Barrie. He is James M. Barrie, M.A. Glory surrounds him, and is clearly noticeable as far away as Kirriemuir and Dumfries—not to mention the Free Church Manse in Motherwell. The photograph shows an undoubted touch of swagger, even though the angle of the mortar-board may be partly explained by the fact that it is slightly too small. Yet of J. M. Barrie it must be admitted that the rest of the great world still knows nothing.

How soon can this flaw be adjusted? That is the next and real point of it all.

## 7

For the moment, though, indeed for the rest of this year, there was anything but a clear pathway ahead. It had been established, certainly, and accepted, that he was to go on trying to be a professional writer somehow. Nobody was firm enough, or was ready with any reasonably promising alternative, to pull him up short or turn him aside by force. Nobody, as a matter of fact, in his immediate circle knew enough about authorship either to advise or deter; that is to say, with the kind of certainty that would be convincing even to themselves. At home, where he spent part of the summer, they seemed to have decided that as yet it was a case for watching and waiting as hopefully as they could; still never quite clear as to where, if anywhere, it was all leading—a point on which the subject of their doubts and speculations would have found it difficult to enlighten them—but still and always with a particularly soft spot for the youngest son. At Dumfries, where he was also staying again, there were still sympathy and support from his brother, and many long talks about literary plans. Advice from this quarter tended, not unnaturally, in a more serious and responsible direction. Carlyle was still the model, and the lighter kind of article was hardly even considered, by either brother, as part of the programme. Nobody, they would have agreed, was ever likely to make a real name in literature like that.

So the other kind of article still went forth, and returned; even though—for the Scotch have never seen reason to suppress such qualifications—they were now all attributed to an author with a degree. More doubts, and more discussions. Yet in Edinburgh, after all, there was still the obliging *Courant*; also the University Library; also the Debating Society, where an earnest intelligence, even though it now belonged to a graduate, could continue to mix with other such intelligences and sharpen its wits. Had anybody any other suggestion? Apparently not. In a way this wasn't exactly the kind of move or opening which had glittered for a moment on the steps of the Synod Hall; but on the other hand it certainly wasn't a retreat. And surely, if one worked hard enough, avoided distractions, and kept watching all the time for opportunity, somehow it would turn into a spring-board after all.

Back, then, in the autumn of '82, to the grey walls, with that ceaselessly generous elder brother again providing the funds. The *Courant* played up, with more complimentary tickets and review copies, if still with precious little cash. The Debating Society welcomed the return of their old member, who resumed his weekly contribution to serious thought. While in the Library, still painstakingly urging himself at more than right angles from the almost open road, young Barrie toiled hour after hour in richly unprofitable research.

A *magnum opus* was planned. Title, if you please, *The Early Satirical Poetry of Great Britain (with some account of the manner in which it illustrates history)*. But at the same time there were to be a number of Essays—not to be confused with anything so trivial as an article—with which he still hoped to bring editors if not publishers to their knees, and burst his way towards fame. A series to be entitled *The Scot Abroad* was foreshadowed, with chapters on Robert Douglas, John Law and—fantastically enough—the Admirable Crichton. Does *A Queen Dowager in Love* sound any more promising or likely to carry the reading public by storm? Not much, perhaps, but as a matter of fact there is no evidence that even one of these works was completed, or, if it comes to that, begun. For in a welter of misdirected energy, and as his handwriting already showed signs of it, he wasn't only bombarding newspapers with heavy, imitative observations on current affairs—which they were unanimous in declining to print—but was also vaguely projecting vast historical romances, and then suddenly switching over to another equally inauspicious notion for a farce.

What he needed, of course, and what, though he didn't know it, he was so soon to get, was first the discipline of writing regularly under some kind of control, and secondly the real, constant test of seeing his own paragraphs in type. Both were essential. Neither, during this rather desperate autumn, was yet vouchsafed. As for the third element—the almost simultaneous discovery that his pen, once trained, was a better guide than anything or anyone else, and that he had been sitting, as it were, on a buried treasure ever since his earliest childhood—this, though it was coming also, was something special to his own case. Hidden as yet, not even to be guessed at as he wrote, and scratched out, and tore up. Waiting, almost under pressure, it must seem to us, for the moment when the cork should be drawn. But meanwhile serving no other apparent pur-



pose than to increase, if possible, the number and severity of his headaches.

Yet again it is all rather mystical and complicated, and Barrie himself would have been the last—if perhaps inevitably—to say that those months were wasted. "I was an idler at school," he told the Authors' Club, many long years afterwards, "and read all the wrong books at college, but I fell in love with work one fine May morning, and I continued to woo her through a big chunk of half a century." This typical statement from a man in his position is—though there is no need to accept any actual month—almost perfectly true. No one has ever worked harder, and even when his visible output diminished he still spent hours at his desk and further hours—walking or curled up on his sofa—in sorting and planning his ideas. Without this merciless habit it is easy to believe that he would never have gone so far, and any author who heard him that evening was undoubtedly being offered the soundest of all possible examples. "Concentrate, though your coat-tails are on fire." Yes, Barrie's whole story, in one way, is the old, the orthodox, if not the hackneyed lesson of Self-Help.

Only of course that isn't all, even if it was virtually all that he could tell them. Some, no doubt, were momentarily carried away—though if they had been permanently carried away, it wouldn't have done them the slightest harm. Others may have been critical or envious, and thought or even spoke of Luck. Yet the luck—which had two sides to it always—was simply the obvious and inexplicable accident that Barrie was himself. That heredity, environment, upbringing, chance, Omnipotence, glands, bio-chemistry, or whatever you like to call it, had put something into him which must eventually colour everything that he wrote and did. A quality, which occasionally he would fight, which sometimes he would seem to encourage almost beyond reasonable bounds, but which was shared with nobody and could neither be transmitted nor explained. That was what we came to recognise, value, rely on, or at times resist and resent. That was what he sold for vast sums of money, yet still retained. That was what made him loved, but always lonely. That was his unique gift, and his curse.

From one of the little pocket-books, which for years he always carried about with him, and in which he entered notes for his plays and stories, and scraps of passing thoughts. Date, somewhere about 1926.

"My case as I vaguely see it is that nothing influenced me—showed no aptitude—had a little box inside me that nothing opened until in later years it did of its own accord. Just a few trifles in it, but I made a game with them for many years, till tired of it before public did so—or about same time."

You see? He felt it, too, but he couldn't explain it. There is humility, genuine as well as ever so slightly assumed, in that entry. He looked back suddenly, he tried to get to the bottom of it all, but he couldn't quite make himself out.

So when it comes to that last autumn in Edinburgh, all we, in our turn, can say is that nothing he ever did there can in the long run be regarded as waste of time. The little box wasn't open yet, its contents weren't even suspected, but work or it might be overwork was the only method of forging the key. Always there was the undoubted fact, even when he was turning out articles almost like the printing-press itself, that he never quite knew what was going to emerge. If he had waited, either for clearer inspiration or until the design was fully complete, the quality must almost certainly have disappeared. Trial and error was his system, whether working against time or not. Notes, drafts, summaries, and synopses all had to go into the melting-pot before the essence—which would quite possibly have little relation or resemblance to any of them—could suddenly be run off. His mind was never methodical; in the end it was always his dæmon that did the job; but without this seemingly methodical preparation nothing of any real value could be released. So though the last few months in Edinburgh brought no apparent advancement, the labour that went into them served to strengthen an indispensable habit. Grind, grind, grind—that was their lesson, and always the first essential before anything else could come. Of what was to be added, in the way of subsequent facility or felicity, there was still no sign; just as, alas, there can be no guarantee that grinding by itself can be expected to liberate an imagination which isn't there. Again we can attempt to describe what was happening, but as an example which should consciously be followed, the whole thing is much too individual and queer.

Home once more, not so much for Christmas—though this was probably included—as for the much more important Scottish festival of the New Year. Kirriemuir under snow. Friends,

neighbours, relations all meeting at little gatherings. Jamie among them, and questions—such as madden all at his age, whether they can answer them or not—naturally being asked. What had he been doing? How was he getting on? What was he going to do next? Was it true—in a tone of mingled pity and incredulity—that he still meant to be an author? “And you,” said one of his well-meaning tormentors, as she clicked her tongue; “and you an M.A.!”

Humbug, as the old diary had it. But agonising humbug for all that. Forced on to the defensive, and pretty stubbornly all the time, but with large joints in his armour through which almost anyone could see. As a student, it had been easy to make some sort of impression by alluding to the *Courant*. But from a graduate far more was expected, both by others and, unfortunately, by the victim of these inquiries himself. Plans and projects meant nothing in this atmosphere. The inquisitors wanted to know where they could read what he had written, and how much he was being paid. The ghosts of rejected manuscripts arose almost visibly. For one or two, perhaps, he had been promised payment on publication, but with yet no sign of when or what that would mean. He answered vaguely, and as mysteriously as he was able; but most of the inquisitors had known him from childhood and all of them were Scotch. Humbug on both sides, perhaps. But not a chance of exhibiting even the outside of the little box.

Patience but transparent doubts in his home. The kindest feelers put out, but of course—whatever further torment this brought—there could be no response. If he gave way now, if he turned to teaching or anything else that was still open, he would have betrayed himself for good. He *must* be an author, and not only that but famous and successful as well. London beckoned him. If only this weight could be lifted so that his wings could take him there, and carry him to its heights. He shut himself up, and wrote till he could hardly see. He knew he was a burden to them all, and a disappointment, and a problem. But if he once even began to admit it, and they took charge, and his dream was shattered for good . . .

No. Bluff was the game. To keep them on his side still by boasting, if you like, of what was bound to happen in a few years. Not much effect on his father. His mother he could always persuade—though this hardly altered his actual position—into talking of his future as a kind of game. He knew how to flatter her. Each of

them had considerable art in twisting the other at least part of the way round their little finger. Even when Margaret Ogilvy was still half-bewildered and half-sceptical at the same time. Yet in the end it wasn't Margaret Ogilvy who touched the hidden spring.

Jane Ann, it was—the devoted but also the practical one—who did that. She knew no more about professional authorship than the rest of them; though perhaps very little less than her younger brother. But there he was, drifting, so far as she could see, when all her Scottish instincts and experience told her that advancement came with definite, clear-cut steps. Whatever you were to be, of course you must set yourself to climb each in turn. There were no short cuts or happy accidents for ministers or inspectors of schools, and why should there be any in literature? He must do something. He must begin. Her loving mind was full of this positive conviction, and full of sisterly impatience too. She was thirty-five at this time, consecrated without question to service and self-repression, but never dulled to vicarious ambition and pride. Her eyes, quickened in their perception by anxiety and prayer, lit on a small advertisement in a newspaper.

Even to-day, so it seems, recruits for the almost utterly altered profession of journalism are sought, by such announcements or otherwise, in Scotland; for Scotch aspirants haven't yet lost their name for keenness, education, hard work, and cheapness. While in the early eighties of last century there was nothing actually miraculous in the *Scotsman* being selected as a medium by the *Nottingham Journal*. The point was, and remains, that they were in the market for a leader-writer. Jane Ann read the little paragraph, and never left her brother alone until he had applied for the job.

Whose idea was it that the great Professor Masson should be called on for a testimonial? Hers or Jamie's? Hers, in all likelihood, for the applicant himself wasn't only still half-reluctant to sacrifice *The Early Satirical Poetry of Great Britain*, but took the very poorest view of his chances. Masson, however—even if it were still more from loyalty to any old pupil than from deep belief in his qualifications—came out strong. And Masson wasn't only a big name in scholarly circles but had once been editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*. The *Nottingham Journal*—which also received another testimonial from Alexander Whyte—was distinctly impressed. It wrote back and invited Mr. J. M. Barrie, M.A., to forward specimens of his leaders.

Whenever he spoke or wrote of this significant moment in later life, it was his fun, or his boast—or eventually, perhaps, his genuine illusion—that until it came on him he had never read a leading article and hardly knew what they were like. This, in a biography, must just be dismissed. Of course he had at least skipped through hundreds of them; and again there is something fishy if not fantastic in the more than twice-told story that he sought enlightenment by pulling down copies of old newspapers which had been stuffed up the chimney. Whenever he performed this particular feat, it was—as he himself let out—in the summer, and certainly not in January, 1883. But it was quite true, on the other hand, that he had none of the required specimens either in manuscript or print.

It wouldn't have given him much difficulty to compose them—set him a teaser at any time, and everything in him rose to conquer it—but for some reason he chose otherwise. Perhaps, even on the real threshold at last, he dreaded exile and the end of his liberty. Perhaps something else inside him insisted that he should leave even this decision largely to his own luck. At any rate his response to that only slightly awkward invitation was to post off an old Edinburgh essay on *King Lear*.

He sat back. He waited. Conscience and ambition may both have troubled him for a day or two, but whatever the *Nottingham Journal* thought of the essay, it looks as if they must have banked on the testimonials. They offered him a post, almost immediately, at three pounds a week.

Doubt fell from the whole family in a flash, while hardly less embarrassing triumph and confidence took its place. All, as you might say, was enthusiasm and excitement, and all, as it happened, was to be completely justified. Only the hero—though three pounds a week was as handsome and astonishing a salary to him as to any of them—retired, as he says, to ponder.

Could he? Must he? Was there no way out of it—by a leap forward or that impossible, longed-for return to his school-days—at the last moment?

His pledge rose up, and in those critical hours proved just stronger than his misgivings. This wasn't the first but may well have been the greatest test that had come to it, and in nothing—except escape from the inevitable terms of payment—did it fail him. All visible signs of pondering vanished, as his mother and sisters packed, as the great news spread abroad, and as—hastily but invincibly—he

dashed through all the leading articles that he could get hold of and saw exactly how they were done.

Time flew. Farewell once more to Kirriemuir. Once more the briefest of visits to Dumfries, where further rejoicing and encouragement, one may be quite sure, were awaiting him. And so—not on foot this time, as he had first crossed the border on that great walk to Carlisle—rattling southwards in a relentless train. Right into the heart of a land that he was to conquer, yet still (though already at work on his first leading article) quite unaware that there was more than one little box in his luggage.

## 8

When Barrie first began living in London—which at the moment is to look forward more than two years—he was considerably struck by a widespread confusion on the part of the inhabitants between the towns of Nottingham and Northampton. Perhaps we are all better informed now, or perhaps not. Possibly a perfectly clear distinction still rather depends on whether we have visited or have some other personal link with either; for certainly London itself, though larger than ever, is just as abominably self-centred. Of course when you are actually in Nottingham—or in Northampton, if it comes to that—this kind of error is unlikely to arise. But elsewhere there does seem to be a slight visual resemblance between the two names; and as accuracy is always important, a special effort should be made, if necessary, to put all ideas of Northampton (in this connection) right out of our minds.

Away, then, with Bradlaugh, Labouchere and any possible notion of footwear. Think, rather, of lace, tobacco, hosiery, Robin Hood, the Goose Fair, of two well-known football teams, and the Trent Bridge cricket ground. Remember that Nottingham is twice as far from London, and nearly three times as large as the town that you must now try and forget. For it was to Nottingham, once and for all, that Barrie made his way in January, 1883, and in which he was to remain until the early autumn of the following year.

Quieter, of course—though busy and bustling enough—smaller, and much more countrified than it is to-day. Very provincial to a Londoner; but very foreign, no doubt, to the new leader-writer as he walked from the station to the ugly building in Pelham Street

in order to announce his arrival. If he asked the way, he might easily have been taken for a foreigner himself, with his pale, finely-chiselled face, his rather long, dark hair, and an accent which at that time must often have been almost quite unintelligible to the natives. His remarkably thick, nailed boots would probably have attracted less attention then than now. But his whole appearance must have been strangely like that of some boyish yet not altogether undignified goblin or elf.

The newspaper which had chosen him, or to which something almost like chance had directed him, was one of three local morning dailies, and though it was the oldest, by all accounts showed every sign of its age. Its circulation was the lowest, and in the hands of the two wealthy but unbusinesslike brothers who owned it, it was just slowly heeling over as the tide ran out. Four years later, though its title has since won a belated victory in death, it was absorbed by one of its rivals. But these four years would certainly have been more like months or even minutes as journalism fights its cut-throat battles to-day.

It had an office, some printing machinery—at this time every newspaper was still set up by hand—a staff, and apparently just enough vitality to have advertised when this fell below a certain strength. But its daily appearance seems honestly attributable to something more like habit or inertia than to anything which could be described as organisation. At this period, for example, it hadn't even got an editor.

There it was, though, and somehow, night after night, it was knocked together and put to bed. Its reporters reported, national and foreign news came to it by scissors and paste, but also by telegraph, its advertisements were collected, its leaders and special articles were dashed off in hasty holograph, a sub-editor and the foreman-compositor wrangled about make-up and space, and finally, between two and three o'clock in the morning, the steam presses resumed their work. Once more another small edition would greet the Nottingham dawn, and peace would prevail until a similar makeshift struggle with chaos started all over again.

It sounds fantastic, and it was fantastic—except that speed and efficiency were not yet regarded with our present excessive respect. Of course the *Nottingham Journal* was no more than a survival, and a moribund survival at that. But the very fact that it was in this extraordinary condition—alive, that is to say, but only improv-

ing its existence—afforded an equally exceptional opportunity for the latest if not the last employee to join its staff.

No editorial supervision to speak of. A good deal of general advice in long-winded letters from the proprietors, but no further interference from them, either; or no more after they had cunningly explained that three pounds a week was now to be interpreted as twelve pounds a month. Within a few hours, almost, of his arrival, young Barrie was let loose to write at least two columns a day, with as much more at any moment as the foreman-compositor was in the mood or had room to print. Quite suddenly he was right through a door at which he had been knocking for months and years. With almost the minimum of actual training he was flung into the full hurly-burly, and with only one day out of the seven in which to catch his breath. It seems to have been nobody's business, or nobody had time, to instruct or advise, or to check his qualifications by anything in the way of a trial run. "Write," said the *Nottingham Journal*, as it might have said "Print" or "Proof-read" if it had engaged him for these purposes; and instantaneously he started writing.

Was this normal, one wonders, in the early eighties? But it can't have been. Nowhere else, surely, would a daily paper have shown such reckless trust in a completely unknown beginner; and no other beginner, even from Scotland, could have accepted it without disastrous results. Something rather terrific must have been summoned from inside him during those first few weeks, as he learnt his exhausting new job and did it at the same time. You would have expected almost anyone to make a mess of it or to crack under the incessant strain. But whether this pressure was what he had anticipated or not—and whether or not the *Journal* realised what an extraordinary feat was being achieved—on he went, day after day and night after night. There were no typewriters in those days to ease the physical effort, and in a short time his handwriting had become quite as inscrutable as his speech. But the printers had the slight advantage of having seen it deteriorate, and in any case there was so much of it that they had all the practice they can have needed. Twelve hundred words, on an average, every day—representing perhaps twice as much in false starts and excisions. Then book reviews as well. Then, in a short time, a couple of weekly special articles on top of everything else. Whose idea was this? Knowing what we do of that peculiar periodical and its slap-



dash methods, we are almost compelled to believe that the insatiable new hand from Scotland had suggested them himself. Mercilessly and almost madly, as the *dæmon* still urged him to write and write and write.

For the leaders, of course, he wrote as a leader-writer. Pontifically; in the first person plural; exuding mature and even elderly wisdom, or if necessary concealing its absence with all the tricks of the trade. Sound, public-spirited stuff on the topics of the day, on local matters, on current political affairs. Secretly knowing least of all about the last subject—for the personalities were all that ever really interested him, and, when he was famous, the opportunity of meeting them behind the scenes—but pretending to be solemn with considerable enjoyment. Assuming the skin of a thunderer so as almost, while actually thundering, to deceive himself. Certainly and successfully giving just the desired impression to his readers.

For the reviews he was a little lighter and a good deal younger. The readers—those mysterious, unknown Nottingham readers—might have noticed something here; except that touches of wit and venom have always, by some regrettable tradition, been associated with reviews. But in those special articles, though there is no evidence either that they attracted any particular attention or had the slightest effect on the circulation, the thoughts which ran down his right arm were beginning to let themselves go. Here he was virtually his own master, or a slave only to the constant pressure of time. And now, as a second, essential stimulus, he was writing not only with the certainty of being printed but with the assurance of being paid. He had definitely escaped from one of Dr. Johnson's numerous definitions of a fool, and to any author what a remarkable difference that makes.

By March he was already Hippomenes every Monday—taking his name, for some reason, from Atalanta's ingenious but unsportsmanlike opponent—and A Modern Peripatetic every Thursday. Hippomenes wrote essays on absolutely anything that came into his head, while the Peripatetic followed a similar course with a column of disconnected paragraphs. Both contributors reappeared on Saturdays in the supplement to the weekly edition, and both continued without a break for eighteen months on end. But was this all that he did? Not at all. There is not only a strong suspicion that he was occasionally sending off articles to the London newspapers—and even more occasionally having them accepted—but he also

managed to write another play. *Caught Napping*, "a commedietta" in one act. Short, crude, peppered with appalling puns, and quite atrociously bad. Designed as a possible vehicle for an actress whom he admired; rejected; unloaded on to the obliging *Journal*, and reprinted—obligingly again, from the same type and with the same puns in italics—as a paper-bound booklet for the citizens of Nottingham to buy. Did they? At any rate the edition ("All rights reserved") has long since become an extreme rarity, as such editions do. Yet there is an indication that up to a point the author had a big pull in the office; that in his own province he had developed into something quite as near an editor as anybody else.

And then the amazing Hippomenes turns suddenly to fiction. In his first summer he contributed a serial story in twenty chapters and eleven parts. *Vagabond Students—Original Sketches of Life at a Northern University*. The University, of course, was Edinburgh; the originality must have burst through any attempt to stick to the ordinary serial rules. Adventures fall thick and fast on five undergraduates ("four Academic Cads and one Academic gentleman") who spend their long vacation taking a Punch and Judy Show round Scotland. Picaresque, romantic, criminal, and comic. Rather actionable also, one would imagine, as he helped himself to the characteristics and peculiarities of a number of his friends. Never again, possibly, did he ram quite so much plot into anything—though it is when they are young that nearly all authors do this—and it is a gold-mine of ideas and fancies from which, consciously or unconsciously, he extracted nuggets for years to come. But principally it was school-boyishly funny—hit or miss all the time with any joke that occurred to him. There was little or no shape to it, and even about three-quarters of the way through there seems little or no reason why it shouldn't go on for ever. But it didn't. Suddenly the loose ends were thrown overboard, and the remaining ends were tied into a hasty knot. Again one can only speculate as to what on earth the citizens of Nottingham made of it, but it seems reasonably positive that there was no insistent demand for more. Hippomenes continued his weekly articles, which even the serial hadn't interrupted, but under this alias no more fiction escaped from his pen.

Good heavens, though, how it went on writing! Nothing could stop it. It never took a holiday, and if sheer application and industry were what was wanted, then the pledge was being kept with a

vengeance. He ought to have written himself right out, there and then. But somehow, because of what was still in him, he didn't. In fact, he was going to keep it up, and nearly as violently, for the best part of another seven or eight years. It was like a habit, at first desperately assumed, then inescapable, ultimately only to be shaken off when—as is the habit of habits—it seemed to tire of its own victim.

No sign, though, of fatigue, no trace of the colds and headaches which we know there must have been, in the material that was pouring on to paper. The mysterious process of dipping simultaneously into an ink-pot and the subconscious continued to fetch up nothing, outside the leaders, but mockery, gaiety, and fun. It was the way it worked. It was what happened as soon as the ink began to flow; and though there were lumps in nearly all these early *soufflés*, they were in the style and hardly ever in the spirit. Yet the style was coming along pretty well, too. One must remember that in the eighties articles of this type were longer than would be expected or tolerated now, and that neither writers nor readers were nearly so nervous of what would now be identified as stodge. Sometimes, as had to be, even the jokes didn't quite come off. But at the best—and it was getting better all the while—there was an easy and most enviable limpidity.

As for his subjects, with complete freedom of choice he tended naturally to the expansion of any idea which had stuck for a moment in his mind. It saw absurdity, and flickered round it until it was even more absurd. It was disrespectful, satirical, ironical, and at complete liberty to trifle with the truth. Anything, down to the most shadowy trifle, could be fitted into the formula. Literature and the theatre were recurrent butts. The ways of women were discussed, with deep and daring ignorance. Cricket, of course, cropped up. So did Scotland, but not very often, and only once—in a Christmas article—with allusive reference to Kirriemuir.

Already, also—perhaps from what is now called a form of escape, or perhaps because it provided so much in the way of a good start—he was writing in a succession of different characters. With his tongue in his cheek Hippomenes would suddenly come forward with transferred or entirely imaginary experiences, not hesitating even to suggest that he was married or a septuagenarian. From outside and from this distance it looks as if it must have been such fun. Happy Hippomenes, one feels, with all that energy and all those

inexhaustible ideas. But Hippomenes was only a part of the small, industrious journalist. And the small, industrious journalist had his own, not always easy company right round the clock.

He lived in lodgings, of course. He rose late, after his late nights. He wrote or roughed out the notes for his special articles. He went along to the office, and would be kept there, doing his leaders and taking his share in getting the paper into some sort of shape, until long after midnight. Only on Saturdays, and only then if his Monday article were finished, was his time his own, and Saturday evening was the one chance of visiting his beloved theatre. On Sundays he was still a pretty regular attendant at the Presbyterian church, but work and the office were waiting for him, and it was anything but a day of rest. He walked whenever it was possible, and again on Saturdays—sometimes alone and sometimes with a companion—he covered countless miles. But unless such a stranger were exceptionally sociable or could afford to be hospitable, he would remain a stranger to all but his professional colleagues. While anything like friendship with most of the staff was only possible in the free-and easy but to young Barrie the utterly antipathetic atmosphere of risky stories in saloon-bars. So again his little shell protected him, or grew another layer, and again this kind of colleague would set him down, and stick to it afterwards, as reserved and shy. Those constant letters to his mother and family must have been a difficult job sometimes; it being absolutely necessary to suppress any form of complaint. Did they guess? Or did they take the output, which was also being posted to them, for granted, and see Nottingham only as a vague extension of the kind of life that they knew? At any rate they were pleased to hear that—on less than a hundred and fifty pounds a year—he was saving money; and already some of these savings were finding their way back to his home.

It wasn't all friendlessness, though—as one can thankfully report—in that year and three-quarters on the *Nottingham Journal*. The members of the Scottish colony, whom he met at church, provided several domestic interiors which he visited from time to time. And in the office itself there was at least one colleague with whom the barriers gradually came down. H. G. Hibbert, a journalist who afterwards also came to London, who specialised on the theatre, and ended as Editor of the *Fra*. There was a bond here between

two dramatic critics—though one of them had already temporarily retired—and another bond in those long, Saturday walks. Hibbert, moreover, had a real home near Barrie's suburban lodgings, and a mother in it to feed him up sometimes and to assist, so a memory recalls, in trimming his frayed collars and cuffs. Fits of pride and bouts of work made this hospitality distinctly intermittent, but there is a further memory that here, as elsewhere, the guest gave his favourite and strongly Caldonian rendering of Irving in *The Bells*.

First and significant meeting, at this period also, with Gilmour. T. L. or Thomas Lennox Gilmour. A compatriot, though from Lincolnshire, eight months older than Barrie, an ex-bank-clerk who had left this post to join the *Journal*. Who had now left the *Journal*, too, and done rather a strange thing—except for a compatriot—which was to enter himself as a student at Edinburgh, where with necessary and typical industry he was writing for the *Scotsman*. On a visit to Nottingham he and Barrie were introduced in the office, and took to each other at once. Gilmour, whose articles had attracted Lord Rosebery's valuable attention, became his private secretary—though somehow managing to remain a journalist as well—and was the first to reach London. When Barrie arrived, they lived together, off and on, as also here and there, for the best part of four years. Gilmour, in fact, henceforward will always be somewhere in the background or foreground, for this friendship was to last for more than half a century. If ever two men came to know each other, one would say it was these. If ever two men frequently irritated and even infuriated each other, yet were linked by something that they were quite unable to break, here again was such a pair. For throughout it all of course there was tested affection as well. And habit, covering and cementing all aspects of their long association. Often, no doubt, as more and more figures come to crowd the canvas, Gilmour must inevitably be overlooked. But always he will be there or thereabouts, and every now and then you must picture Barrie giving his spirited imitation of Gilmour, too.

Here is another glimpse from the *Journal* days. Another actress, well enough known then, and much photographed—in her stage parts and by advertisers and print-sellers—for her large eyes and miniature good looks. She comes to Nottingham, and the little leader-writer is again bowled over at once. The power of the Press, and the lucky discovery in a shop window of a rare portrait of this goddess, serve to effect an introduction. She proves to be generous

and kind; not, it is true, to the point of forcing her management to accept *Caught Napping*—which was written, lest there be confusion here, for a rival—but the little leader-writer's courage swells. He hires a victoria. He takes her for a drive. His heart swells too, not for the first or last time in the presence of beauty on the boards—or off them, if it comes to that—but never before, though often afterwards, has he been as daring as this. He is intoxicated, and though nothing whatever happens—except inside him—the intoxication will never entirely pass away.

Nor is this drive the end of the romance. He writes to her—of course he writes to her—and will keep in touch with her, sentimentally and as possessively as he can contrive, for quite a number of years. Meeting her, worrying about her health, achieving considerable intimacy, and on one occasion even using the power of the Press again to deny an announcement of her marriage. Then, as, still young, she fades from the stage, so also she passes from his foreground, while others come to share and presently to take her place. He will go on and up, and she, who could easily have gone with him, will be happier, let us hope, with her strange memories by herself. Yet always there will be something special and tremendous about her in his imagination, and, as we all know, it isn't an imagination that can ever leave anything alone. It builds up such a fantasy that even in his old age some younger woman's sympathy can bring the whole story up again. With additions, of course. If there is enough sympathy, with astonishing additions. What he believes himself by this time, nobody knows. The listener's sympathy trembles on the verge of pity. She thinks, though she isn't heartless, of other stories, and wonders suddenly if this isn't the saddest as well as the simplest of the lot. Poor little leader-writer in his hired victoria. Poor little great man with his own memories, and all the torment that he has brought to others and himself. Poor little betwixt-and-between who never can do without softness and kindness, but has so often—like some changeling child—frightened them both away.

In the summer of '84, though the files of the *Journal* show no interruption in the special articles, he paid his first visit to London. Stayed a night or so. Looked round. May have called on an editor or two. Knew by this time that just as it had once been authorship or nothing, so, eventually, it must be London as well or nothing.

No luck, though. No encouragement. And not nearly enough saved yet to justify an insane risk. Back to Nottingham; *pour mieux sauter*, of course, though actually that spring-board was rotting, even more swiftly than he suspected, under his feet. The rich proprietors, though naturally they kept their plans to themselves, were worrying more than ever about the overhead. Slightly ominous atmosphere in the office—for you can't pay people to gather news and then expect them to be blind to what is under their noses—but still no open or positive threat. The Modern Peripatetic took up his pen again and dipped it in the old mixture of light-hearted gall. Hippomenes contributed articles on Slang, on Facial Expression, on Paper Pellets, and—profiting to some small extent from his recent experiences—on Provincial London, and Railway Travelling. The leaders and other literary items continued to run the gauntlet of the foreman-compositor, and his prejudices against anything that couldn't clearly be recognised as news.

Another legend. Or is it the truth? Biographers and bibliographers have all had to face this problem, and the present investigator has no qualifications for succeeding where they have failed. When a man reaches Barrie's subsequent position, there is always a trickle and sometimes a flow of printed reminiscences from those who have known him. Some of these paragraphs, of course, are true; others are based on hearsay; others treat hearsay as if it were truth; and others, again, have no basis, nebulous or substantial, at all. The conglomerate statement in this case is that while he was in Nottingham he was turning out, in addition to everything else, short, sensational novels which were published in some very cheap form in London. One a week, says one version. Few and far between, says another. He got five pounds for them, he got three guineas for them, they were this length, that length, or any length you like. They appeared in a magazine called *Bow Bells*. They couldn't possibly have appeared in *Bow Bells*, and whoever said this must have been thinking of *Home Chimes*, to which he contributed articles and not fiction at all. The mist which covers the whole business is one of the thickest we have yet met.

What about the fountain-head? Unfortunately in this sort of affair the plain fact must be admitted that we simply cannot trust him. He has spoken as if there were something in it all, he has even quoted the fantastic episode in which a heroine was rescued from a villain at the altar steps by a sudden eclipse of the sun. Yet

some of us knew him, and some of us knew also how easily, once he had given himself an inch in this kind of story, he would go on until he had taken several almost absolutely unfounded ells. Accuracy, once more, meant nothing to him if the story were a good one. His world was never so dull or real that the boundaries between what happened and what might have happened were fixed. And, again, by the time he was recounting these anecdotes he had written so much, gone so far, and had been, on paper or in his imagination, such an enormous number of characters, that even the rack couldn't have elicited the actual truth.

Here is a guess, then. He read these novelettes, he saw just how they were knocked together, his mind provided him with a string of the typical situations, and he may or may not have found time to experiment with them—profitably or unsuccessfully—himself. But here, on the other hand, is something that we can really take hold of. The *Pall Mall Gazette* for August 9th, 1884. Unsigned article—but there is no question that he wrote it—entitled *The Manufacture of Penny Numbers (by a Manufacturer)*. This is the first contribution—where it is possible to give chapter and verse—which he is definitely known to have had accepted by the London Press; and of course—as the sub-title implies, and as we have seen to be already his frequent custom—he writes throughout as if he had been manufacturing Penny Numbers for years. This is just what he would do, and just what he did.

But his notes for this article have also survived; twenty-five numbered items which were all to be worked into the final draft. They are brief, and not too legible, but they are entirely objective. They, at any rate, were written from the outside, and summarised and satirised what he had observed. Only in the article itself does he change his standpoint and, still satirically, write of the industry as if from within.

Does this prove anything? Of course it doesn't. You have the evidence now—it may be added that, quite characteristically, he contributed practically the same article to another newspaper about three years later—and you can take it or leave it, or believe anything that you like. No one can hope to trace those novelettes if they ever existed; and if they never existed, we still know that their alleged author worked while he was in Nottingham like a man possessed. It isn't really important at this time and distance. There were only two things that he couldn't write if he tried. One, which



he did try, was verse. The other, which he once had a chance of but recoiled from, was straightforward biography. Anything else was possible, and there is precious little else that one would like to swear that he had never done. The Penny Numbers had to be mentioned, and now they have been mentioned. But after Nottingham there isn't even a suggestion that he ever touched them again. After Nottingham he edged into fiction, and its manufacture—whatever mechanism was employed or sometimes misused—quite certainly never exhibited the trademark of a former hack. Far too much Barrie in it. Far too little of the professional, Grub Street technique.

And yet, of course—round it comes again—we are never, at any period, dealing with an ordinary man.

Just as Edinburgh waited six years and then inspired *An Edinburgh Eleven*, so Nottingham waited three years and then bubbled up in the pages of *When A Man's Single*, where autobiography, snippets of old articles, and fragments of an admittedly rather Penny-Number plot were flung together as a serial for the *British Weekly*. And again, as in the case of Edinburgh, by that time the author would feel so safe from provincial leader-writing and midnight battles with a foreman-compositor that he could linger on the ridiculous side of the whole affair. Not that he hadn't seen it before—and written of it, in one of those old articles, within a month of his unintentional escape—for whenever the pen began moving, it, at any rate, could see the absurdity of anything. But although those newspaper chapters in *When A Man's Single* are obviously based on personal experience, and although anyone with a pen like that must spend much of his time in a curious state of detachment, there is no need to assume that in Nottingham, any more than in Edinburgh, things were either easy or particularly amusing at the time. In a sense—in this inward isolation and its accompanying freshness and individuality of outlook—he was always the amateur; questioning and, if he felt like it, breaking every rule that he met. But of course, in the practical, everyday sense, he had to be a professional, too. Rob Angus, the journalist hero of *When A Man's Single*, wasn't only a much simpler character than his creator, but both of them knew from the beginning that nothing could keep him down. Barrie, in Nottingham, was starting a story of which even Barrie couldn't clearly see the end. Or when he saw it—when the feeling of cleverness and oddness rose up and positively assured him that

he was heading for the heights—still there was a gap in the scenario that filled him with anxiety and alarm.

Twenty-four already. Getting on, you know, and still he hadn't made a real mark. Nothing with which to reproach himself in the way of hard labour. Probably no fear now, as there had been a couple of years ago, that an outbreak of idleness might let him down. Yes, working like a black or beaver whether there were headaches or not. In a kind of niche, too, so long as it lasted; a niche that he had made largely for himself, and nobody else either wanted or was able to fill. Earning money. Showing and proving to his mother that there was nothing yet to regret. Counting and glorying in her letters of approval, even when an article hadn't been altogether to her taste.

But what next? That was the point. That was what haunted him, in this second summer, by day and night. That was what brought incessant and secret and dreadful doubts, so that praise from Strath View turned sour, and he wanted to boast and abase himself at the same time. Nobody else realised how far short of his ambitions he still lagged, and it wasn't in him to explain anything as tremendous as that. He wanted to be in London, he wanted to know everybody, and most desperately he wanted to be known. But though this vision was plain—so plain that sometimes in his lodgings or on his walks he was hobnobbing with a whole company of distinguished heroes—again there was no real bridge that he could yet see or hope to cross. Work, he was convinced—and he was quite right—was the only way for him to find it, but meanwhile what if the niche was really a rut? And what if the rut should never lead to London at all?

Niche, rut, or whatever it was, by the late summer of 1884 it was quite obvious that the proprietors of the *Nottingham Journal* were seriously thinking of destroying it altogether. Rumour ran round the office, and though as long as there was a *Journal* at all, it must always need reporters and printers, the principal literary contributor was much more vulnerable to a stroke from the axe. For already it was possible, for far less than twelve pounds a month, to buy syndicated matter, by writers much better known than Hippomenes or the Modern Peripatetic, which was distributed all over the country at the same time. Progress combined with economy. But neither of much advantage to those whom the new system must supplant.

So the principal literary contributor paused for a moment to

answer another advertisement; recommending himself as assistant editor to the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Perhaps with testimonials again; certainly this time with a whole budget of authentic specimens. No good. The *Liverpool Daily Post* would have none of him. Just a modicum of relief at their decision—which was actually ordained by the applicant's luckiest star, and needn't have troubled him at all. Yet far more apparent was the check to his career and, almost immediately, the gulf which opened at his feet.

The proprietors had made up their minds. They had saved anything up to thirty shillings a month on his promised salary ever since he had been with them, but now they were going to save even more, and the syndicated articles were to take his place. Ultimatum, for the end of October. After which his services would not be required.

He wrote for them until the end. Hippomenes—but Hippomenes with no knowledge of his supply of golden apples—contributed *More Compositors' Freaks* on October 27th, and was reprinted in the weekly edition on the last day of the month. On October 30th a Modern Peripatetic provided his final column of cheerful and disrespectful notes. Then they both vanish from those yellowing pages—in which the name of J. M. Barrie had never yet appeared—for another train had taken both contributors back to the north. They had learnt a great deal, which it is quite possible that no other method could have taught them. They didn't consider themselves either entitled to a holiday or by any means beaten yet. Dogged courage accompanied the returning exile, and was prepared to face even his family and fellow-townpeople—always two of the severest tests. The gulf, moreover, as it happened, wasn't a gulf at all, but the real beginning of the bridge. Of all his journeys back to Scotland, though—and though many of them were to be far sadder than this—none touches our sympathy in quite the same way. To retreat, when you are J. M. Barrie. It must have been a most extraordinary sensation, even in the autumn of 1884.

## 9

Kirriemuir again. A table to work at, with a view not of the town and its two tall chimneys, but of the little garden and to the south towards Glamis. An unemployed journalist sits there, with his notebooks before him, and his eye looking far further south still. There

are London evening newspapers, as he knows, which pay a guinea, or sometimes as much as two guineas, for articles of fifteen hundred to two thousand words. Three articles a week at a guinea, and he'll be back at his old salary. Or two articles a week at two guineas, and he'll be beating it handsomely. His secret ambition—and if it comes off, there will be no more doubts—is to reach a pound a day. Well, say three hundred and fifty pounds a year. Is it possible? Can it ever be done? His gaze contracts to the paper before him. There is still a surplus of ideas from Nottingham, and others may be caught at any moment as they flit by. That isn't the difficulty, for even when ideas run short, he can always force himself to start writing and see what will come from his pen. Yet it is a different and alarming feeling, somehow, to be working at home like this with no foreman-compositor waiting to print or even to mangle what he writes. Much more of an effort—of course, until he gets the hang of it—and somehow, again, touches of self-consciousness and nervousness which show much too clearly on the page.

In his family's eyes there was at the same time all the old, deep-rooted suspicion of a calling with so little security—as, indeed, had just been shown—accompanied by pride in his achievements and an assumption that they were bound to go on. Both attitudes emerged in comment and questioning, and both had to be dodged when he left his desk. For he was established and he wasn't established. He was a professional, but he had lost his job. Alternatives to writing were quite out of the question, and even his family seemed to realise that. But in the autumn of 1884 there were black moments as he toiled—with free board and lodging, it is true, yet they were also part of the burden—to earn a living as a free-lance in Fleet Street from nearly five hundred miles away. If only he could be there in person, editors could be besieged, topics could be dealt with while they were still topical, persons of influence could be bent to his will, and odd jobs, such as reviewing, could be picked up to keep the pot boiling all the while. London. Somehow it had got to be managed. Perhaps Professor Masson could help again, or Dr. Whyte, with fresh letters of introduction. And surely the record at Nottingham couldn't completely be overlooked.

But money was the obstacle. First the railway fare, then the cost of keeping himself, while waiting to be accepted and paid. A second retreat, through lack of resources, was unthinkable; but editors were notorious for taking their time. Careful calculations still showed

appallingly heavy odds, and meanwhile far, far too many articles were coming back. Or just vanishing into those distant newspaper offices, without so much as an echo to tell of their fate. He must work harder, then. It was the only thing to do. Grind, grind, grind.

Another idea flew past, and was suddenly trapped. Talking to his mother, he had been reminded of those early stories of Kirriemuir in her childhood, and all was grist now that came to his mill. Walking, he thought them over. At his table he began making notes. It seemed to him that there was a kind of article here, and as he took up his pen again it also seemed that much the easiest method was to write it in the first person. Not as himself, but as some elderly and still slightly disembodied character who was drawing on his own memories and knowledge. Not a Scotchman—not yet—but some vague kind of visitor. The method appeared to release something, and he wrote on, with an odd mixture of detachment and intimacy, describing the Original Seceders with admiration and touches of tenderness; yet already—for the pen insisted—with a faint flavour of mockery as well. Every now and then he noted the number of words in the margin, and when he had written enough, he stopped. The idea, so he imagined, was now exhausted, and on second thoughts it was hardly what the average editor could be expected to welcome. Nevertheless, he copied it out again, as legibly as he could, and posted it to the Editor of the *St. James's Gazette*. For this was one of the ones that paid two guineas.

He didn't expect any acknowledgment, and didn't receive it. If a manuscript were returned, then he knew it had been rejected. But silence—for there were no *St. James's Gazettes* on sale in Kirriemuir—might either signify that a cheque would arrive at the end of the month or that he would never hear of it again. In the meantime he went on writing, though naturally not on a subject which had just been drained dry. And while he was doing so—to be precise, on November 17th, 1884, when it rather looks as if he were actually on another visit to Dumfries—the editor in question (having first, like other editors, shown his power by altering the title) caused it to be printed and published. It appeared as *An Auld Licht Community*. Anonymously, of course; but never mind that. The point is that on November 17th, 1884, something had very positively started.

Barrie didn't guess it. He was still labouring away from his old and new notes, not one of which dealt with his immediate surroundings, past or present. But while he is thus employed, and before the

next development takes place, that editor—the great Frederick Greenwood—must unquestionably have at least one long paragraph to himself.

Greenwood at this date was fifty-four, or thirty years older than his contributor. He was a self-made man, as they say, and had first come in contact with printers' ink as an apprentice to a firm of manufacturing publishers at the age of fifteen. He was promoted to reader, and shortly afterwards promoted himself to authorship as well. First as a journalist, then as a prolific writer of fiction. In 1861 he became editor of the *Queen*. In 1864 he became editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. In 1865, though still for a while continuing in this last post, he became the first editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He occupied this position for fifteen years, during which he built up and established a policy of patriotic or, as some said, of Jingo Liberalism, and it was on his advice that Lord Beaconsfield made his celebrated purchase of the shares in the Suez Canal. In 1880, however, the ownership of his paper was transferred, and on a political difference with the new proprietor Greenwood and all the members of his staff resigned. In April of that year, having secured fresh backing, he founded and began editing the *St. James's Gazette*. A fine and rather fierce-looking man, with the side-whiskers of his period, he was not only a stout antagonist and a considerable thorn in the side of his own alleged party, but took the closest personal interest in contemporary literature and its exponents, whether their work was appearing in his own columns or not. How he found time to do all this, or how, in what must now seem such primitive mechanical conditions, an evening newspaper was printed and distributed at all, are some of the mysteries which should humble our present-day pride. London, of course, was much smaller, expenses all round were infinitely lower, and circulations which would now mean instant extinction were still large enough to make economic ends meet. Perhaps, if an old *St. James's Gazette* were suddenly delivered to us after tea, we should think it heavy and long-winded and dull. But type and paper were both of first-rate quality, and there was a dignity in the whole daily production which, even if we don't want it, we should seek in vain to-day. London had five evening newspapers in 1884, and two of them—the *Echo* and the *Evening News*—were pretty low down in the scale. But in *The Globe*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the *St. James's Gazette* the flavour of education was constant and strong. Readers

actually expected it, and the editors and their contributors were far from ashamed of it. In 1884, though, Northcliffe was nineteen and Pearson a year younger. Even *Answers* hadn't yet been born. So there was still more than a whiff of stateliness in Fleet Street, and giants—though they might afterwards be dwarfed for a while—to spread its spirit abroad as the period drew to a close. None mightier than Greenwood, none stronger in principle, sincerer in his opinions or more distinterested in his task. Presently his battle must be a losing one, as time and a newer spirit came sweeping by. But in 1884 he was the right man in the right place for J. M. Barrie. He showed it by a few scribbled words on an article that he returned.

"But I liked that Scotch thing," he wrote. "Any more of those?"

There weren't, and it was many weeks since the author had given the Scotch thing more than a passing thought. But if an editor wrote like that, then of course he must try. He racked his brains. He consulted his mother and Jane Ann, neither of whom seemed to think that the editor could possibly mean what he had said. In his mother's mind, particularly, there was also a notion—subsequently to be confirmed—that Kirriemuir wouldn't like the attendant publicity; would resent its history being exposed in this manner, and for the benefit of strange people in London. But Jamie could talk her into anything, and soon enough her old memories were again being revived. It appeared that the material hadn't been exhausted, after all. The pen took charge again, and a second article grew. *An Auld Licht Funeral*. Greenwood accepted it. And still wanted more.

Very well, then. He should have it. The syndicate in Strath View put their heads together—for even, thought at least two members of it, if the man came to his senses, there was now everything to be said for striking (at two guineas a strike) while he remained in this unaccountable mood—and *An Auld Licht Funeral* was followed by *An Auld Licht Courtship*. In February, though still offering no home to anything else, the *St. James's* published *An Auld Licht Scandal* and *An Auld Licht Wedding*. Greenwood, and some of his readers, were beginning to think that he was on to something. The author was far less certain, for still, each time, he was convinced that he had reached the end. Topicality, as he saw it, was his line; being funny or observant about the news or his own experiences from day to day; and as a matter of fact, after one more example (*The Auld Licht in Arms* in early March), there was a break in

this kind of output for more than two years. He shook off Scotland when he plunged into London, though perhaps this was luck again, for the two years had enormously increased his skill.

That is looking ahead. This is still March, 1885. For the first time, and though no article which he wrote for the *St. James's* was ever signed, an important editor had paused to notice him and encourage him. To do more than that, in fact, since in March there was a sudden run of luck with other articles as well as the Scotch ones. Surely, then, his foot was on the ladder again at last, with something like ten acceptances in under two months, but as surely, if he were to mount the next rung, he must tackle this new personification of Providence on the spot. London was calling him, or even if it didn't know this yet, it would soon find out. He must go there. He'd got to go there. If he put it off, from caution or cowardice, he would gain nothing and might easily lose all. The retreat had lasted long enough. This time he was absolutely determined to advance; even if he perished in the attempt.

Consultations at home; but they were frightened there; they had heard of London, and it was a place where almost everyone perished in the attempt. Full of dangers. People sometimes disappeared in it altogether. Jane Ann alone, and by her constant, unconscious example, continued to show him that courage—if one had it—was the only thing. His father was admittedly out of his depth in the matter. His mother was merely maternal—if one may speak thus of a quality which her son was to blazon as the most wonderful in the world. Yet how could she possibly understand what was at stake? She feared that Greenwood, if once he set eyes on his contributor, would think him too young—and it was true that the small, slight figure looked far less than his age. Continually, and for years after this, she was afraid that each article would be the last that he could cudgel from his brain. He was her son, and she prayed for him, but here was no outstanding example of a mother's faith.

She couldn't stop him, though, and now he had left her—at least and in any case to put the problem before his brother in Dumfries. Alick would be forty-three at the end of this month, he was still a success in his post, and his family was still growing; yet for some time both brothers had known that he was living with an ever-present problem of his own. This isn't his story. It must just be set down that in a long and tragic business his own conduct was never in question, and that all was never lost while the strength of



a noble and generous character was able to save so much. Yet the younger brother had always to be haunted, and presently to take his full share of the burden, too. So much must be told and remembered; for it was something from which one inward part of him could never entirely escape.

Once more, though—always kind, always steady and reliable—the elder brother could and did weigh the prospects and contribute his advice. He thought them chancey, but Nottingham had impressed him, and Greenwood, in this sort of discussion, was something more than a mysterious or even slightly supernatural name. A. O. Barrie, if anyone, would have known all about its influence in the worlds of politics and letters. Perhaps it was he, then, who suggested that Greenwood himself—for still no other editor had emerged from the Olympian cloud—should be written to and asked for his views. It was done, anyhow. Either accompanying or closely following an article on the rocks near Dumfries (twenty-one carefully-numbered notes even for this), a request for his opinion was dispatched. The contributor made it quite clear that he wasn't begging for a post on the *St. James's*—though, as a matter of fact, this sort of possibility remained for several years in his mind—but London, he felt, was the place for him, and he was certain that he could manage, if necessary, on as little as a pound a week. If, then, the editor would give the matter his kind attention, his decision should be as final as on anything else.

Slight pause in Scotland. Greenwood, one may imagine, found no difficulty whatsoever in making up his mind. Distant contributors, or would-be contributors, were always writing to him with this kind of suggestion, and he hadn't been an editor for twenty years without learning that encouragement brought the gravest risk of turning them into millstones round his neck. A prompt reply to Mr. J. M. Barrie, categorically advising him to stay where he was. At any rate—for there was a hint of a weak spot in this one case already—until the submission and acceptance of a good deal more of his work.

Final enough, one would say. But throughout the pause, and still more, it seemed, after Greenwood's answer, the Scottish contributor was also making a discovery. His determination had gone so far, and the siege of London had become so absolutely essential, that dissuasion was as irrelevant as a message intended for somebody else. He couldn't wait now, and whatever the upshot he wasn't

going to wait. He packed his clothes, his note-books, his *Roget's Thesaurus*, and his folding desk, in the solid wooden box which had accompanied him to Edinburgh and Nottingham—and before that had travelled, first with his uncle and then with his brother, to Aberdeen—and on the night of Saturday, March 28th, 1885, he caught the train to St. Pancras.

Sitting up in the dimly-lighted third-class carriage, he sped through the darkness towards his goal. If this adventure, the greatest yet, brought in that pound a week, then he knew he could hang on; and would hang on, what was more, until it turned into the coveted and glorious pound a day. He looked back, and still there were no regrets. Forward, and sometimes the night hid everything except grind, grind, grind; yet sometimes there was the clear and old glimpse of what it must lead to. Fame, of course. And fame in the only way that mattered; as a writer who had mastered and was honoured for his craft. As the train jolted, ideas came flickering past; for the articles which were to establish him, for the great novel which was to raise him to the heights, for comedies which were to fill the London theatres and place his name on their walls. All waiting for him, all to be dug out and brought to the light of day by concentration and ceaseless, unsparing toil. His available capital at this moment amounted to twelve pounds, and Gilmour—a Scotchman still struggling to make his own way there—was the only Londoner he knew. Fears fought with hopes as the grey dawn crept in from the east. He slept a little, dreamt a little, and presently, as he roused himself, the backs of mean houses stared blankly yet threateningly at him through the window. Another tunnel eclipsed them, and the train was slowing up. A quarter to eight. London. He was here. He'd done it. J. M. Barrie had arrived.

And then you know his story of what happened on this early Sunday morning all those years ago. Dispensing with the costly services of a porter, he hauled his wooden box from the van, and began lugging it along the platform—it must have weighed considerably more than he did—so as to leave it in safe custody while he walked out to seek for lodgings. But suddenly he paused; for on one of the station bookstalls there was still, left over from last night, a placard of the *St. James's Gazette*. And on it, printed for all to see, but to make one traveller's heart leap in the air, was the title of his article about the rooks.

To-day, of course, no such 'compendious placards leave the great rotary presses, nor, save in the most exceptional circumstances, would any newspaper dream of billing this class of contribution at all. So it wasn't only, as the traveller instantly realised, that within less than five minutes of his arrival in London he had already earned two guineas. There was also the much more mystical point that this omen could never have been offered him if he hadn't, for the very purposes which had brought him here, been born—as we said at the beginning—just at the right time.

## 10

London in the year 1885 wasn't only smaller than it is now. Its skyline was lower, its streets were darker and infinitely muddier—crossing-sweepers and boys to clean your boots would nearly always be part of the contemporary scene—and though there was great and quietly ostentatious wealth in Mayfair and Belgravia, at the other extreme there was something almost like savagery in its gin-palaces and slums. Horse-traffic everywhere, of course, on cobbles or macadam. Policemen with beards, and oil-lanterns after dark. Gas in the houses, street-lamps, and theatres. Sulphurous steam trains in the Underground. Smoke and dirt everywhere, and Sundays drearier and blanker than in any other country or age. Long hours in the shops and offices, sweating in the factories, vast quantities of beggars, and a general attitude towards the humbler members of Her Majesty's forces which put them very much in the same class. Hyde Park, at the other end of the scale, almost a preserve for the rich in their carriages. Clubs, but only for men, where you sat during the day-time in a top-hat, but where it was essential to wear full evening dress for dinner. Bohemia pretty well outlawed by the respectable—until it was successful, when Society could both patronise and pay. Any amount of dullness, and sordidness, and everywhere—in clothes, furniture and decoration—a welter of the worst possible taste. Or so it seems as we cling, not always so very comfortably, to our present interpretation; for not yet, though it may well be approaching, has the late-Victorian revival come round.

Yet one thing there was—quite apart from the fact that hundreds of thousands of people in the eighties were perfectly satisfied with conditions as they found them, or as their corporate option had

brought them about. There was a firm and still justifiable conviction of ultimate security. The Queen was on her throne, Great Britain was the richest and most powerful country in the world, expansion overseas was quite obviously destined and almost illimitable, while at home the march of progress and improvement was as clearly in its steady but still not the least alarming stride. Moments of crisis there were—in this very year Khartoum had fallen to the Mahdi and dynamiters had damaged the Houses of Parliament and the Tower—but in spite of this, and in spite of violent political dissensions, nobody imagined that the end of either the world or the present system was at hand. Change, even when it was visible, was still slow and gradual. Uncertainty was only for the individual, and never in any serious sense for the race. The whole background announced solidly and soothingly that it was here, with only minor and beneficial modifications, for ever. In fifteen years from now people would still be turning their heads to stare at a petrol-driven motor-car, and it would be nearly twenty years before the first aeroplane left the ground.

In the literary world there were giants, popular authors, failures and—as always, of course—hacks. But throughout this, also, there was an absence of haste, a strong basis of tradition, appreciation by a great body of readers—to whom it never occurred to rush into print on their own account next week—and though the steps which any rising author had to take might be steep and difficult, there was no question that he was climbing anything but a rock. If he got to the top, or near it, in those days, he could stay there. The public was faithful, and had a particular veneration for its more elderly entertainers. Books, if you will believe it, and even articles in newspapers, were seriously and lingeringly discussed. Great ladies summoned authors to their tables not merely as head-hunters, or in order to get free merchandise for a bazaar, but because they still had the power to make their writings better known. Reviews, for almost every publication, were copious and lengthy, were again taken seriously, and still had a definite effect on sales. It was an age which somewhere, as it now seems, must have borne the seeds of corruption; but it hadn't ended yet, nor was its end in sight, and meanwhile it could distribute not fitful or fugitive, but genuine and durable rewards. It was an age, in short, which from the literary point of view provided truer as well as sounder opportunity than has yet been offered since it passed away.

What else—before we join our hero once more—is to be said of the spring of '85? Sensibly and inevitably we turn to the appropriate volume of *Punch*. Tenniel we find; Charles Keene, George du Maurier, Linley Sambourne, and Harry Furniss, all going strong. Also Toby, M.P. The big public figures are Gladstone—seventy-six this year and nearing the end of his third Premiership—Joseph Chamberlain (still a Liberal, and at the Board of Trade), Goschen, Charles Beresford, Bismarck. Russia is now the public boggy, and partly responsible for a Budget of over a hundred millions, which sends the Income Tax soaring from sixpence to eightpence in the pound. In the issue which would have been on sale at that same bookstall there is a notice of Gilbert and Sullivan's latest opera, *The Mikado*, at the Savoy.

That brings us—and here we may feel quite certain that our hero had an eye on them too—to the other London theatres. The Bancrofts were at the Haymarket, the Kendals would be opening very shortly at the St. James's, Miss Jennie Lee was appearing in *Jo* (adapted from *Bleak House*) at the Royal Strand; Miss Nellie Farren was in the burlesque, *Mazeppa*, at the old Gaiety, *The Private Secretary* was at the old Globe, and Pinero's *The Magistrate* was at the Court. Almost all these offerings were preceded, as was still very much the fashion, by curtain-raisers. Wilson Barrett and John Hare would also be returning to the London boards before the season closed.

Now, however—for we have finished with the conspectus—it is still, if we are to accept the date given by Barrie himself, the morning of Sunday, March 29th. Bloomsbury was his objective, not only because it was near St. Pancras and full of furnished lodgings, but for the sake of a plan, never put into execution, of using the reading-room at the British Museum. His story is that, after breakfasting in the Gray's Inn Road, he wandered by mistake into several boarding-houses—though wouldn't these, in fact, have been cheaper?—before he found his first resting-place in Guilford Street, which still runs past the south side of the Foundling Hospital grounds. And then, he says, he went back into the Gray's Inn Road and bought a penny bottle of ink and a top hat.

On a Sunday morning? Who would be a biographer, and where will he find the truth? It is positive, in this instance, that the *St. James's Gazette* published *The Rooks Begin to Build* on Saturday, March 28th, just as it is positive that Barrie wrote it. But then comes

utter confusion. The placard fits a Sunday, but the hat doesn't. Or the hat fits any other day of the week, but the placard just won't. So which, if either, are we to accept? That he arrived on a Sunday and saw the placard, or that he arrived on a week-day and bought the hat? Or that forty-five years afterwards he knew that both experiences had once befallen him, couldn't—as why should he?—remember the exact day of his arrival, turned up his old copies of the *St. James's*, found the date of the article, and ran everything together to make a far better story than will emerge from anybody else's research.

Let's leave it like that. For Heaven's sake don't let us add to the confusion by quoting a letter, written nearly three years later, from which it is quite clear that at that time his silk hat was brand-new. Don't let us begin arguing as to how many hats he bought, for Barrie will still have been Barrie, and what he said of himself was at least, in the end, as much part of him as anything that he had actually done. When he wrote *The Greenwood Hat*—from which these statements are taken—he looked back through a long, crowded, and extraordinary life at the small, thin aspirant that he had once been. His pen was at work again, at that big desk in the Adelphi, and as the neat, left-handed writing covered the familiar half-sheets, a sense of contrast rose up and must flow on to the page. What had started this notion of a fragmentary autobiography for his friends? Finding a collection of old articles in a hat-box. How was he to begin his story? An old ghost momentarily filled it, and the trick was done. The struggling and, as the pen got going, the almost starving journalist of the eighties touched his successor in that large room overlooking the river; and if he came to be pictured as spending what he could so ill afford on that preposterous but again touching purchase; if one could hint that this emblem of ambition was worn solely to impress an editor; or add (still more affectingly) that it had never fitted and was always falling off—well, this, in any case, was what the seventy-year-old author and his pen were going to do. Nor are we being cynical. Nor are we denying that truth can disguise itself in thousands of ways which make it far more difficult to interpret or impossible to believe.

But we do say that, for all those details about dinners off half-penny buns, Barrie in Bloomsbury never starved. That he liked to suggest this and in later years even to assert it. But that from this moment he always had money, whether he spent it on buns or not.

That he has also told some of us, categorically and rather indignantly, that he never, at any period, worked and slept in the same room. That undoubtedly there was a slowish start, and a string of disappointments for a month or so; but that faithful friends were already in the offing, that his family were constantly sending him supplies of provisions from the north, and that though now—as for the rest of his life—he was a Londoner, soon enough he was making frequent visits not only to his two homes in Scotland, but to the Murrys, his sister and brother-in-law, on the outskirts of Bristol as well. Of course, from the far end of the vista, it looked like penury and short commons, and of course, during those first few weeks, economy was essential and he must often have faced the possibility of defeat. But the phase didn't really last long, and was frequently accompanied by little outbursts of extravagance too. For what he refrains from telling us in *The Greenwood Hat*—though it is all there by implication from beginning to end—is that already, whenever there was the slightest necessity or reason for it, there was no human being over whom he couldn't cast his spell.

"If you have it, you don't need to have anything else; and if you don't have it, it doesn't much matter what else you have." That is Maggie Wylie, in *What Every Woman Knows*, on the subject of Charm. Barrie possessed it, could turn it on—or off, if it comes to that—whenever he chose, and even those who came to suspect it, to suffer from it, or, in a final, desperate sort of way, to deny it, still knew in their hearts that it was about the nearest thing, in this case, to an absolutely irresistible force.

Well, look at Greenwood. He sat in his office—which wasn't actually in Feet Street, but in Angel Court, off the Strand—he was a busy autocrat, who moved at this time among the mighty, and he had just written to a contributor telling him first not to come to London, and secondly, if he wished for any further encouragement, to continue with his sketches of Scottish village life. Whereupon the contributor called on him, with a selection of articles which in only one case had anything to do with Scotland at all, and somehow, for all his undoubted powers of resistance, he began accepting them. Not over-willingly at first. They were far lighter than anything that he would deliberately have commissioned, and there were booby-traps in them for his readers, who didn't hesitate to write and complain. With an effort the great Greenwood would fling perhaps as many as half a dozen back. But the elasticity of the small,

pale contributor almost instantly produced a fresh batch. The great Greenwood, still—though not for much longer—unaware that he was being charmed, hit out at them as at a swarm of mosquitoes. Yet there was a phrase here, a joke there, or a bit of impudence somewhere else which, although it was entirely out of character with the *St. James's*, couldn't really—just for this once—be let go. The contributor himself, too, with his strange accent, his solemnity, and his remarkable gift for wasting an editor's time—no, somehow one would miss him if he didn't come and perch, or presently lounge, on that chair. So points were stretched for him, and presently, also, there were readers who didn't complain. "Who wrote that article about cricket?" they asked, for still every one of them was unsigned. And there is no editor who doesn't like to answer: "Oh, So-and-so. One of my discoveries. Rather a promising young man."

Thus Greenwood fell into the toils, and though editors also like to keep promising young men in their place—for which the best method is to refuse their work with somewhat arbitrary regularity—a profitable bond came gradually to be forged for both. As it strengthened, it apparently became part of an editor's duties to put in a word for the contributor elsewhere; to introduce him to some of the appreciative mighty; generally speaking to take something more than a pride in his growing success. Though this, again, is perhaps looking a little too far ahead.

In those first weeks—which began in Guilford Street, and were followed, because it was rather cheaper, by an almost immediate move round the corner into Number 8, Grenville Street—there is a record (actually covering a period from the beginning of April to the end of June) of at least a hundred articles which were planned, completed, or both. Greenwood, according to the same list, accepted and printed about one in four; which isn't what would have been happening a few years later, but is a long way from literary failure. An average already, you see, of quite four guineas a week from this source alone; even though the cheques only appeared at the end of the month. It isn't and it wasn't starvation. Furthermore, but for the contributor's persistent habit of flogging his pen and of sending in articles which Greenwood had specifically discountenanced in advance, the proportion of acceptances must certainly have been higher still.

This, however, was the way that the contributor worked, between his long walks and, at first, his lonely meals. Utterly regardless of



the safety-valve. Writing, writing, writing, as fast as he could cover the paper. Ideas by the hundred—every morning the newspaper, which he studied solely from this point of view, supplied him with a fresh flock; as of course it must, if you look on almost every human activity as from a little planet of your own. More ideas, from this same standpoint, on the long walks, where at any moment an incident or a shop window might start them off again. Technique, of which the contributor would still, and with some justification, have declared himself ignorant, emerged from sheer practice and output. The pen raced away, still and increasingly with that fondness for playing other people's parts, and though there was repetition and in its own way, perhaps, almost a monotony of treatment, individuality—pronounced and unfettered—never entirely disappeared. It may have been habit by this time, it may have been one or other of the interpretations of genius, or it may have been Heaven knows what; but though these sessions at the writing-desk often left him on the verge of physical exhaustion, there was hardly ever any difficulty in beginning again, just as fluently, next day.

Not much luck, though, with the other editors so far. And a distinct setback—but what else could you really expect?—from John Morley, to whom Masson had recommended his old pupil. Morley (forty-seven that year) was at this time editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, and, perhaps not unnaturally, invited his predecessor's protégé to submit a list of titles first. The protégé, for once anxious to oblige, even to the extent of thrusting a square peg into a round hole, offered him *The History of the Universities*, *A Life of William Cobbett* and—with another glance at his Edinburgh notebok—our old friend *The Early Satirical Poetry of Great Britain*. Morley, again reasonably enough, objected that these subjects weren't up to date—one takes leave to doubt, though, whether he would ever have received the completed manuscripts in any case—and the episode closed. Not so, and not for a moment, the protégé's labours elsewhere.

Another distinctly important development in this spring of '85, reintroducing T. L. Gilmour. It is just possible—it hinges on the doubtful and illegible date of one of Barrie's letters—that there had been a meeting during his short London visit of the previous summer. In this year, however, it is known definitely that Gilmour—still combining his secretaryship to Lord Rosebery with various forms of journalism—was living at Vernon Chambers in South-

ampton Row. Barrie knew it, for they had never entirely lost touch, and though during the first few weeks he seems to have kept quiet about his new adventure—perhaps because he was still uncertain for quite how long it could last—there came a day when he tried to call. Gilmour was out, but finding a note on his return, sped round to Grenville Street. Interesting and particularly significant reunion, for again the different elements confirmed their discovery at Nottingham, and it was only a few days later that Barrie made a second move and took rooms adjoining his friend's. What is more, from now until Gilmour's marriage at the end of '88, whenever they were both in London, they were living under the same roofs. Sometimes Barrie was in Scotland or with the Murrays, sometimes Gilmour had to stay with his chief at Mentmore or Dalmeny, and once Lord Rosebery sent him to Paris to polish up his French. But in the many intervals they were always together, first in Vernon Chambers, then back in Grenville Street, and finally in chambers in the now non-existent Furnivals Inn. And Gilmour, who, though less than a year older, had at this time made many more contacts in his secondary calling, was not only able and generously willing to share them, but also possessed something of which his friend was so far as innocent as he was ignorant.

A banking account. Mysterious, but quite invaluable. For up to this point—and as this is true, you must do your best to believe it—Barrie's only method with the cheques that he received had been to cash them when they were open and to put them in his pocket-book when they were crossed. But Gilmour wasn't that kind of Scotchman—if, indeed, there has ever been another one—and an early glimpse of the pocket-book made him take urgent and good-natured action at once. The crossed cheques were paid into his own account, and he wrote out an open cheque for the total. Was that how the trick was done, then? You found a friend, did you, and you used him as your banker? Apparently. Barrie was completely satisfied, and—again if you will be kind enough to believe us—this extraordinary and almost fantastic arrangement continued for no less than five long years. Hundreds if not thousands of pounds during this period passed into and out of Gilmour's account. If an individual cheque was unduly large, then Gilmour must exchange it for a batch of more convenient size. If Barrie wanted to pay anybody by cheque, then Gilmour must write it. Several times, especially at the beginning, there were further complications when

Barrie wanted more out than he had paid in, and asked for it, and got it. Or when he showed a preference for round figures, took less than he handed over, and immediately forgot all about the balance. Never has there been such a lengthy and preposterous series of transactions, and if Gilmour hadn't been as clear-headed as he was kind-hearted he could never possibly have kept his own pass-book straight. Never once, again—but it is no use pretending that he didn't use his friends when they could be useful—does it seem to have crossed Barrie's mind that the system was calculated to drive almost any other character mad.

"Can you exchange cheques again?" he writes. "If you have as much as £15 lying idle, I would be glad if you would let me have it." "I enclose cheque. Take off your £10 and let me have the remainder." "I enclose a *Dispatch* cheque. Let me have it in four small ones." "I enclose cheque. Let me have it in tens." "Let me have two cheques for this, one £100, the other for remainder." And towards the end, when Gilmour had been married more than a year, but had still failed to convince him that the method could be bettered: "These two cheques come to 4d. more than five guineas. Buy yourself a Xmas card with the fourpence and send me a cheque for the rest."

A bit cool, isn't it? But Gilmour accepted it, emerged from the phase of money-lending, saw his fellow-lodger shooting up, eventually, like a sky-rocket, stood by him through all the resultant financial confusion, wasn't always, perhaps, more successful than others could have been in stemming the inevitable erosion, yet certainly carves a niche of his own for the patience and tolerance which he brought to a remarkably thankless task. Those nights, in later years, when Gilmour and Barrie were closeted together—the one doggedly arguing, and the other emitting frantic and terrifying groans—during the annual battle with Schedule D. Could anyone else have faced them so often? But of course there is quite a simple explanation. Gilmour—though he, like hundreds of others, had a full and responsible life of his own—was helpless, from the very beginning, under the spell.

Towards the end of this summer there is further evidence that things were at any rate some distance from the rocks. The youngest sister, Maggie, came up to London as Barrie's guest, and accompanied him, a little later, on a week's visit to Bristol. Here, by what

wasn't entirely coincidence, he found his little actress playing, and saw as much of her as he could—though already there was a metropolitan rival in the cast of *The Private Secretary*. For these beauties just fascinated him, and even before they could dream of his offering them parts, they were discovering—unaccountable as it sometimes seemed—that they were wondering when he would turn up and begin amusing them next. No more than this, so far, from their end. Much more than this from his. He thought he was in love—a condition which no analysis has yet differentiated from the real thing—not once, but over and over again. Enjoyed it, suffered from it, stood aside and carefully observed himself in both states. Took and gave, as greedily or as generously as the circumstances allowed. Couldn't break his own heart in any case, for it was far too large and not nearly brittle enough for that. All the pretty actresses, the long string of them, to whom he wrote such wonderful letters; who found so much of him out and still were puzzled and charmed. No, they can't be taken from the picture, or we should be further than ever from the truth.

At Bristol, also—Marathon House, Staple Hill was the address—he found time to note that one of his elder sister's rooms had been decorated in white and blue; as would be apparent, in due course, in the *St. James's* and then in a novel and a play.

And so north, in something like calm triumph after less than a four months' campaign, for August in Kirriemuir. Money, or at any rate cheques, in his pocket. Ideas still filling his head, and pouring on to paper. Prospects fair. Admiration in the home circle only slightly tempered by what the town was now saying about his articles on the Auld Lights. For copies had drifted up there by now, had been passed from hand to hand, and it was the general opinion that the David Barries of Strath View were in rather an embarrassing situation. Anyone could understand that they were proud of a son who had made his way to London and was apparently earning a living there, but there was a general feeling that writing about his native town was a bit too easy and in rather poor taste. There were a number of gross inaccuracies, too. He had muddled up names, dates, and places, kept on pretending that he remembered things that he couldn't possibly remember, and either had his tongue in his cheek sometimes—most unsuitable behaviour for an author and a Scotsman—or was wilfully exaggerating for some purpose which filled them with mistrust. So Barrie, still hoping to collect more

material now that he was back on the spot, for once found some difficulty—except with his mother—in exerting his power to charm. “The Auld Lights,” he says in a letter, “shake their heads at me. I could rip some of them up to get the notes out of ’em.” However, this couldn’t actually be put into practice, and, as we said, there were no more Auld Licht articles just yet.

That same letter, and another during the same month, reveal further points. Already he is so certain that London is to be his other home that he has left his clothes, papers, and even pictures there. Already an idea has come to him—and having come to him has been put into an article as an accomplished fact—of spending part of next summer in a house-boat on the Thames. And already—this is where we are forced to catch him out again—he is smoking a “sublime box of cigars.” The house-boat will come into his first full-length novel and his first successful full-length play. The cigars will run through a whole series of articles, later to be republished as his first and only book of London sketches. When that has happened, it will delight him—and more than ever it will delight him as time goes by—to tell everybody that he wrote all the tributes in it to tobacco before he had learnt to smoke. The statement will be printed and reprinted again and again, people will do their best to believe it, and quite a lot of them—for the spell can be just as effective on paper—will succeed. How like him! they will say; and in this they will be perfectly right. For in the great years of the newspaper articles there was practically no personal experience to which he would hesitate, for a couple of guineas and the secret fun of it, to lay claim. But the story of the smoking can’t be swallowed. Not only cigars but pipes as well were going strong by this summer of 1885. And only, from now on, when temporarily terrified by doctors, would he moderate a habit of which he was so willing and well-known a victim.

In September he came south again, not the least cautiously or doubtfully—no more of that now, so swiftly and steadily had he climbed the first steps—but as a man with rooms waiting for him in London and an almost assured income to pay for them. Greenwood, who must have known many far better-trained substitutes, had him in the *St. James’s* office for a fortnight or so, while Sidney Low—who was at that time assistant editor—was away on his own holidays. For a time he was again turning his hand to any sort of note or paragraph that was needed, but the flow of articles was

barely interrupted, and as soon as he was out again it was once more in full spate. The *Pall Mall Gazette* was besieged and fell. By ringing the changes now, the percentage of acceptances was rising all the time. Still, for it was the contemporary custom, his actual name was hidden from the public wherever his work appeared, but by this autumn they were beginning to talk quite a lot about him behind the scenes. 'The touch, the unmistakable flavour of everything he wrote, had only frightened them, it seemed, until Greenwood had shown them the way. He was in the *Graphic* now, the *Spectator*, *Chambers's Journal*, the *English Illustrated Magazine*, the *Era*, the *Boy's Own Paper* and even, with a couple of short, communicated witticisms, in *Punch*. Picking up small sums, too, as could be done then, by peppering the newspapers with little items of out-of-the-way news. If some of them were the product of quiet eavesdropping and quiet guess-work, or if sometimes he snatched them from the very jaws of Gilmour and his circle of friends, it was recognised that a little recklessness was all part of the game. Everybody forgave him, and almost everybody—which certainly includes Barrie—was wondering what on earth he was going to do, or to say he had done, next.

In October, for instance, or thereabouts, he had an article not only on his adventures in a lunatic asylum but in Burma as well. Each the result of a sort of inward challenge. Each successfully achieved. The Dumfries Amateur Dramatic Club had once performed in an asylum, and imagination did the rest. The anonymous engineer who had banked and bridged the Irrawaddy acquired his details from the shelves outside a second-hand book-shop. He flashed into print, and vanished, never to be heard of again. Unless, that is to say, anyone was smart enough to recognise him as a mother, a member of Parliament, a sandwich-board man, a child, a grandfather, or a cat. For in this manner, always, the articles came most easily, and editors and readers were alike bamboozled and bewitched.

To Gilmour again. "Let me have the cheque as soon as you can, as I want to see how it looks in gold and to chuck it away." That isn't the voice from a garret, and the pound a day was already approaching, even if it hadn't yet been passed. Immense labour, considerable wastage, and nothing so far to earn any more than a first and last payment. To keep it up the output must never slacken, and somewhere already there was a distant glimpse, in this particular kind of writing, of a physical as well as financial limit. Two pounds

a day and even three pounds would be reached before the inevitable or at any rate the destined turn of the wheel, and after that editors could just weep or whistle. Meanwhile, back in the same first autumn in London, he was making valuable friends; and two at least of them would soon be giving him regular commissions.

F. W. Robinson, who had founded the weekly periodical *Home Chimes*, never really made a success of it, but was always good for a guinea as long as it was needed. Alexander Riach—Sandy to his intimates (but it always took a lot to get Barrie to call even his close men-friends by anything but their surnames)—was still on the *Daily Telegraph*, but was also London correspondent to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, published in conjunction with the *Scotsman*. Another staunch admirer and by the end of the year suddenly able to prove it in practical form. He was appointed as editor of the *Dispatch* and almost his first action was to place a couple of columns, or more very often, at Barrie's disposal each week. Which again, as we shall see very shortly, led to the end of anonymity and the beginning of everything else. Work and luck were running hard and fast together now. To Gilmour, in December, out of London somewhere with Lord Rosebery: "My family here keep me busy. Will you exchange cheque for £26? Mine enclosed."

Yes, he was entertaining his father as well as his sister this time—and taking David Barrie, aged seventy, to see Carlyle's house in Cheyne Row. Only a year ago he had been under his roof, the host had been a guest, and wondering if he would ever get to London at all. Sheer inability, one might say, to write what was expected, coupled with complete inability to stop writing had brought him where he was.

As the snowball of success gained size and impetus, already it was influencing his manner. He knew he was doing well, and startlingly well, but neither he nor you must say so. If he boasted—and sometimes he couldn't help it—it must always be by mournful meiosis; some secret part of his pride and growing assurance must always be kept hidden up his sleeve. He attributed his more notable triumphs to chance, and while you knew he didn't mean it, you also knew that he was often bafflingly near the truth. Thus he played with humility—and one knows his skill at all his chosen games—even while he was achieving ascendancy. Flouted Fortune as scrupulously as he wooed her. Seemed already to be bearing an

intolerable burden, though he clung to every ounce of it with a grip of steel. And was as prickly as his own national thistle if anyone dared to cross the given yet mysterious limits at which all must learn to pause.

What did it mean, and where had he gone to when he just sat smoking and brooding—withdrawn, apparently, from the whole visible world? It was a little frightening, when only a few hours ago, it might be, he had been talking—though in his own slow, strange accents—as if nothing could stop him, and so frankly that his listeners had thought they could never be barred out again. But they were wrong. Away he went, leaving them puzzled and bewildered; or indignant at such treatment and the impossibility of asking its cause. A fantastically impressive little figure curled up there with his dark and distant thoughts.

Yet gaiety and even sociability were always, in these early days, waiting somewhere only just round the corner, and the moment a mood was over, back he came as the very centre of whatever fun and amusement were going on. He could be so remarkably normal, too, in the many intervals between extremes; and though his pen—whether light or serious—was always up to its pranks, a large and important part of him was still no more than a professional journalist with almost everything that this implies.

In January of the new year, for instance—1886, that is—when H. W. Lucy, or *Punch's* Toby, M.P., was appointed as editor of the *Daily News*, Barrie's instant speculation was whether he, as at least an acquaintance by this time, should apply for a post on the staff. So it seems that the thought of greater security still tempted him, or that already he felt that free-lancing, for all his success in it, might prove another blind-alley in the end. As he hesitated, however, the few vacancies were filled; and it was still true enough, with Greenwood and Riach almost feeding out of his hand, with *Home Chimes* and all the rest of them leaving less and less to find no home, that there were increasing compensations at the end of each month.

Still in Vernon Chambers during this month and spring. Still, whenever he had time for it, worshipping or worrying about his pretty actresses. Still walking like anything, writing, smoking, having headaches, going to theatres—sometimes as a critic, again for the *Scotsman* or a London weekly—meeting colleagues and rivals in their rooms or at little restaurants, calling regularly on Greenwood as a welcome visitor or accompanying him, perhaps,



from his office to the Garrick Club, where there would be further introductions to his friends. Suddenly another and tremendous hero swings into his orbit, to remain there until the end of his days. George Meredith; nearly sixty now; not tall, but with a strikingly handsome, short-bearded, curly-headed, ruddy-complexioned head. Vivid and passionate. A long-term slave to literature; poet, novelist, and—since he had earned praise and homage but never the fat income of more popular public entertainers—journalist and publisher's reader as well. A glittering, masterful talker. But difficult and all too often disappointed in stern struggles with himself and others. In another couple of years a legacy would do much to ease and mellow, and though deafness and crippling illness would later cloud the last phase, he would end with every kind of recognition save that which all authors who lack it must always value most. A great man and a great literary figure, though his style was at once his distinction and the millstone round his neck. Quite out of fashion now, they say, even among the intellectuals—except for some of his poetry—but in the late eighties he was very much their pride and their exceedingly unaccommodating pet. More poetry and his last three novels were still to come, but at this stage he had already reached his greatest heights. Honours would follow, and the general public, though still resolute in refusing to read him, had no doubt in the last twenty years of his pre-eminent position. But this was his tragedy, or perhaps one should say the most enduring of his tragedies; to win appreciation and even adulation from those best qualified to give it, yet to watch writer after writer hitting the golden bull's-eye which he was far too honest to despise.

It had to be thus, and he wouldn't have been George Meredith if it had been otherwise. Disappointment didn't sour him, though he frequently lost his temper; and though he made enemies—of whom he himself was certainly at times an outstanding and uncompromising example—he never lacked for faithful, forgiving, and devoted friends. Greenwood was one of them, did much to help him, and appears—if not altogether recognisably—as a character in his last, unfinished novel. And it was Greenwood who was delighted when he noticed and asked about an article in the *St. James's*; who told the author, and sent him, with his blessing, on his first pilgrimage to Meredith's little house on Box Hill.

Or not actually the first, according to Barrie and *The Greenwood Hat*. He had been there already, he tells us, "to gaze at the shrine,"

and had even caught a glimpse of the occupant (dressed as always in grey homespuns and flowing, scarlet tie) first through a window and then approaching him terrifyingly down the garden path. To ask, no doubt—and if this story is true—what on earth the little figure meant by standing there and staring at him, and to have him sent packing if he hadn't quickly run away. Such is the legend, and perhaps it is only deep suspicion, after dodging so many traps in that engaging but so often fantastic record, that makes a biographer hesitate and try to hedge. One wonders, for instance, how far the busy, hard-working, and by no means widely-read Barrie had really studied the master's works; how far he may at this time merely have absorbed them, as it were, through Greenwood; how far that message of encouragement from the top of Olympus or Helicon may have loosed the flood of admiration which from this moment never ceased.

Not that it much matters, for we may be quite certain that the pilgrim was well up in every novel even if not in every poem of the least importance by the time he paid his authorised call. We can be quite certain that the new hero, for all his critical asperity, was immediately charmed, flattered, and overwhelmed. Though more than thirty years older, he could still be a boy when his crotchets and sensibilities gave him the chance. He had a passion, in this mood, for any kind of ridiculous story or simple absurdity, could throw off all the weight of his frustration and anxiety and produce his celebrated and glorious laugh. Barrie had got him, probably within five minutes, and he was never allowed to escape. Here was something in which both could bask, and the beginning of a close association that lasted for well over twenty years. Meredith certainly widened the circle—it was he, for instance, who added Thomas Hardy, who eventually succeeded to his place. And Meredith gave advice, which was gratefully and humbly accepted, though it is almost impossible to trace more than the faintest actual effect. But Barrie—each year making the gift of more value—gave an often thwarted and dissatisfied old man the love and devotion which the curse of genius had killed in one of his sons and all but frightened out of the other. He gave him, it may perhaps be said, his reward after all. It was what he wanted to do, and he did it; and for once it was a gift entirely free from any ill-starred magic of his own.

Even the best and most painstaking of the bibliographers has

missed quite as much of the output at this period as he has netted, or in the case of articles where title and treatment have been less outrageously characteristic has hesitated to enter them on the list. The early note-books, though, and early letters, make it quite clear that there was no slackening in the pace; that the *St. James's* and *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* still led the field, with *Home Chimes* a good third, but that a literary divining-rod would find masses of material elsewhere. Cheques coming in nicely, and as Gilmour was in London again this spring, little delay in turning them into cash. As summer drew on, the walks tended more and more in the direction of cricket matches at Lord's, where the enthusiast sat on the ground—as you did in those days—to gloat, criticise, and applaud. But early in June—twenty-six by this time—he was up in Kirriemuir again, with no dread now of missing opportunities or being unable to conduct his business from the north. Going to church twice on Sundays, and telling inquisitors—who inevitably asked him whom he sat under in London—that he stuck to Stopford Brooke. It wasn't true, but it shocked them—for Brooke was considered almost a free-thinker—and shut them up. Kirriemuir, one gathers, was already being viewed by a witness from without, and though duty and loyalty took him there again and again, it would be very many years before the town itself crept right back into his heart. Perfectly natural; for his wings were taking him far from its horizon, and until it fell at his feet—which it actually did long before he melted and fell on its neck—it was apt to show so much too clearly how well it remembered the first attempts at flight. A prophet in his own country; that must still and for some time be one aspect of these visits. But he loved his family, and it was unthinkable, always and whatever happened, that he should let them down. London for expansion; Scotland often enough, for scrupulous and even mortifying contraction. Yet again if he were playing a part up there, one knows that it was played to perfection. Or in other words—which only in a sense can qualify anything that has just been said—so thoroughly and convincingly that neither he nor others, while the scene was laid in Strath View, could distinguish it from the real thing.

South again at the end of the month, July in Vernon Chambers, and north once more—after a week in Edinburgh, where there were talks with Riach and a dinner with Masson—at the beginning of August. Only, however, for another short spell; for the whole out-

look was still so promising that what had been merely a dream last year could now be translated into fact. The first house-boat—a life-size and adventurous toy—on the Thames at Cookham. A glorious, expensive fortnight, with work going on all the time, of course, but with paper lanterns, laughter, friends—yes, and the original little actress—in the evenings. Extravagant, romantic, enormously satisfying. Temporary and entire release of the dashing character inside him, as host, captain, and gay dog. How he loved playing this part. What joy he always took—though later it would involve playing two parts at once—in spectacular outbursts which he could only just afford. For he never tired of the contrast between these and the brief years of real drudgery; so that even when head-waiters in the big London restaurants were bowing to him and calling him Sir James, though he glowered at their recognition, he glowed because he was lunching or dining in a big restaurant at all. No close observer could fail to be conscious of that.

In September he and Gilmour—though this was the autumn when Gilmour was actually for the most part in Paris—transferred their quarters to 8, Grenville Street, where Barrie had been living when they first joined forces; and as September, in London at any rate, is always the start of a new year, the more permanent tenant began what he had been planning and eyeing for some time. A novel. Essential, obviously, for a writer with ambition, and practicable in at least one way now, for the commissions and other contributions could be guaranteed to keep him even though he borrowed some of their time. Less simple, perhaps, in another sense, after putting everything for so long into a shorter and deliberately ephemeral form. Some of the articles, it is quite true, had trembled on the verge of fiction, but even so they were sketches rather than stories, and so far nobody had suggested that running a number of them together would turn them into a book. No, this must be a clear if arduous effort to increase his length and stick to the same thread. He walked up and down; he smoked, pondered, looked back at *The Vagabond Students*, frowned, turned over his pile of old newspapers—and suddenly saw how it could be done.

It was a compromise. It certainly wasn't the big novel which had always been part of the scheme. But there was an idea which he had used, just after getting to London, in the *St. James's*, and again, at the beginning of this year in the *Evening Dispatch*. Title, in the first case, *Better Dead*, and in the second *The Society For Doing*

*Without Some People.* A youthfully brutal idea, with murder as a joke, and the victims selected on the typically intolerant grounds that their names were appearing far too often in the Press. But it could be expanded, and if he sat down and started writing, it shouldn't be long before he discovered how.

A framework suggested itself, for it was there with him in the room. His hero should be an ambitious Scotch graduate—as this notion bubbled, he calmly helped himself to Riach's surname and Gilmour's combination of callings—but before he got him to London there should be some preliminary impudence about both Kirriemuir and Edinburgh. So there was; and with no more compunction about mocking at his university than at the string of celebrities who would be dealt with when their own turn came. But Kirriemuir? A moment's pause, for doubt, or conscience, or remorse. The jokes were all ready to fall from his pen, but so far he had never used this actual word; for in those early Auld Licht articles he had contrived—though the inhabitants and all who knew it held the clearest of keys—to avoid giving it a name at all.

It needed one now, though, for no hero could set off from an anonymous abstraction, and it would be impossible to dodge the difficulty without weakening the plot. He dodged it for four pages, and took a plunge. Kirriemuir should be "Wheens"—he knew well enough by this time what sounded Scotch to the English—and it might have been better, but he couldn't wait. The whole concoction, in fact, was written at a hand-gallop, and though he tried to make it seem longer by using an immense quantity of paragraphs, its ten chapters only came to about thirteen thousand words. He had fun, almost for the first time, with dialogue; more fun with sly bits of parody; and even more fun by thumbing his nose—there can really be hardly any other description of it—at one well-known contemporary character after another. He set them up in a row, flung his jokes at them, and down they all went. Lord Rosebery, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, W. H. Mallock, Joseph Chamberlain, W. T. Stead, Robert Buchanan, Sir William Harcourt, Labouchere, Lord Randolph Churchill, Bradlaugh, Sir George Trevelyan, Professor Blackie, Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning—not to mention others whose names have now faded from public consciousness—were all treated with the same ridicule and irreverence; while even a number of notable women, from Mrs. Fawcett to Mrs. Langtry (but with a special puff for his own, particular actress), were included in the

harlequinade. It wasn't exactly in bad taste—unless any of the targets eventually happened to think so—and only a foreign psychiatrist could pretend that the theme of murder showed secret sadism; but quite apart from its slapdash formlessness and the frank internal evidence that most of it was made up as it went along, it trod consistently on the very verge of libel. Must have overstepped it, with very little doubt, in these more sensitive times. Indeed, one can hardly imagine such a volume escaping a shower of injunctions if any present-day writer should be moved to the same sort of fun.

Funny it was, though, and if often with a good deal of crude hit-or-miss, yet often also, with a very special and personal trick of slamming in a laugh at the end of a sentence. It took the writer only a few weeks, and he was rather ashamed of it afterwards, though at the time he thought it as amusing as anyone. By November he had sent it—Greenwood having obliged with an introduction—to Messrs. Blackwood, but without so much assurance that he wasn't already considering where to offer it next. A long and familiar silence ensued. Sometimes he was hopeful, sometimes a little desperate, and all the while he was as aware as anyone that he hadn't really written even a minor novel at all. Yet by hook or crook the effort mustn't be wasted—for if he had a motto at this time it was that somehow every penny must be extracted from every single word and thought—and meanwhile he was neither idle nor letting things drift.

It was in this same month, for instance, and as an example of how even guineas could be forced from any material at hand, that there developed the episode of Gilmour's cheese. Gilmour had left this behind at Grenville Street, with urgent directions that it should be turned at regular intervals, so that it might be ripe and in good condition when he came back. And Barrie, though he frequently found himself thinking of it when he was out, or in bed, somehow never managed to touch it until too late. The cheese, accordingly and immediately, not only became a chrysanthemum in a flower-pot, which he had forgotten to water (for the *St. James's* and subsequently in *My Lady Nicotine*), but reappeared two years later—this time as a tacky oil-painting to be protected from dust, but accompanied by the admission of its original identity—in the eighth chapter of *When A Man's Single*. One could go on like this, but one needn't. Ideas weren't wasted; that is the point. Sometimes, indeed, as one traces this constant economy and constant helping

himself to every detail or anecdote within reach, a sudden temptation arises to say that he hadn't got any imagination at all. Having nearly said it, one is aghast. Having recovered from this emotion, one realises something else. That nobody's imagination comes straight, or as one might say parentless, out of his own head. On the contrary, of course it is what goes in, what happens while it stays there, and the individual manner in which it again emerges, that will always provide everything except shorthand reports. This, if we pause to think of it, is the whole process of imagination; though no one could wish to deny that there are heads and heads.

So the large one at 8, Grenville Street, with its high, wide forehead, its clear, sunken eyes, its sensitively-modelled nose, drooping moustache, and untidy black hair, bent over its desk, and followed the article about the flower-pot with a couple of articles ostensibly written by a schoolboy. A vein which always went down well with Greenwood, and was never exhausted so long as articles were being written at all.

In November, also, there came the long-delayed satisfaction—though unfortunately without payment—of seeing his name as an author for the first time in print. J. A. Clyde, who would presently have a distinguished career at the Scottish Bar, and eventually become a Law Lord, had been organising a special publication for sale—profits in both cases for charity—in connection with an Edinburgh University Union “fancy fair.” It was very much an *édition de luxe*, with gilt, vellum, illustrations, and contributions by Brown-ing and Stevenson. It was called, with a Latin tag in explanation, *The New Amphion*. Barrie was distinctly flattered when—though as a matter of fact it seems to have been Gilmour's suggestion—he was asked to join in. Sent along a fantasy of undergraduate life—*The Scotch Student's Dream*—and was considerably less encouraged when the proofs and a preliminary announcement came back with his name spelt “J. M. Barry.” One sees that he still had worlds to conquer, and he saw it—sometimes disturbingly clearly—too.

Same month again, for instance. Bad patch with the *St. James's*—for Greenwood never entirely abandoned his preferences and dislikes. No word from Messrs. Blackwood. His younger sister up in London, staying with him, and expenditure suddenly chasing if not overtaking an income which could still seem perilously precarious during even a brief run of bad luck. Plans for starting a new Edinburgh daily were afoot, and its editor was being taken from the

*Scotsman*. This left a vacancy on their staff, and Riach, having suggested Barrie, was empowered to discover his terms. He telegraphed asking for £500 a year, with liberty to go on writing for the *St. James's*. The *Scotsman* countered with £400 and thought the *St. James's* should be dropped. Barrie accepted by letter, and immediately telegraphed asking them to ignore it. He had decided to consult Greenwood, and as soon as he did so, the whole thing was off. Greenwood not only thought it would be a great mistake, but would help him, so far as possible, to place more of his material in the monthly magazines. Wonderful and providential Greenwood. "Now that it is all over," Barrie writes to Gilmour, "I almost wonder at myself for thinking of it at all." But of course he had made the right choice, and the *Scotsman* thought no less of him. They would still be very glad to see anything that he sent them, and he continued to send them both articles and notes. Presently, when Gilmour came back again, the two of them became principally responsible for its London letter, which was signed "Grenville" for a number of years.

In December Joseph Thomson was in London again—by a coincidence which sounds more like a novel he had met Gilmour in Paris and had been spending most of the last few months with him—and Barrie, still worshipping, turned even Thomson into authoritative articles on Emin Pasha. The bad patch was over. The scare about the *Scotsman* had shown clearly enough where his heart and real future lay. A periodical called *Court and Society* had been rather strangely added to his list. Greenwood was snapping up almost everything that he got again—including an account of a supper given to reformed thieves, which would be used later on in *Sentimental Tommy*. The Press, as a whole, hadn't thought very much of *The Scotch Student's Dream* in *The New Amphion*, but that was all over, and on one day the *St. James's* had printed two articles in the same issue. Off to Bristol for Christmas, with little to regret in the busy and increasingly prosperous and promising year that was closing. Indeed, the only real fly in the ointment was that Messrs. Blackwood, though they had been sent a reminder nearly a fortnight ago, were still preserving the majestic silence of the grave.

1887. The year of the Queen's first Jubilee. Back in Grenville Street, with Gilmour still in Paris—but still receiving and exchanging all cheques, as well as supplying, consciously or unconsciously, details of foreign customs which were continually being twisted and reproduced in print. Plenty of other friends, though—nine out of



ten of them in the same great game—for walks and talks. Many forgotten now, or their names only with difficulty to be linked to their work and lives. Others—Jerome K. Jerome was one—to fight their way forward until they reached their particular heights. But nearest to Gilmour, at this and for some time afterwards, came the big, broad figure of Henry Brereton Marriott Watson; a young New Zealander who had been in England about a couple of years, and was now a budding journalist with a string of forty novels in his line of fate. "Cloak-and-sword," mostly; many deservedly successful; few, probably, remembered at the present day. But here was a friend who for a while marched side by side, who furnished more fodder for a quantity of articles, and must never be forgotten as we peer back into his miniature companion's past. H. B. Marriott Watson. Does anyone recall *The Princess Xenia* or *The Flower of the Heart* nowadays? He was one of Henley's young men for a while. He couldn't have written for so long if he hadn't liked it and made money by it, but of course we can't all expect to be remembered when our time is done.

Henley hasn't come in yet, though. First there must be many more ups and downs. The new but short-lived Edinburgh newspaper, the *Scottish Leader*, asked for and printed a certain number of articles and notes. *Home Chimes* was nearing the financial rocks on which it, also, would founder before long. The London Press was showing a tendency to lift little extracts from the articles in the *St. James's*, but still seemed curiously unable to distinguish between irony and straightforward truth. As so often happens, the author's own favourites weren't always as acceptable as material over which he had taken considerably less trouble, and as he still frequently tackled subjects about which he knew nothing and almost obviously cared less—politics, for example—disappointment couldn't always be attributed to bad luck. All the time the little box was opening, and what came out of it could never be quite the same as the contents of other little boxes. But still it was mostly a case of immensely industrious triviality, of writing anything that would bring in money, of trying path after path which could clearly lead nowhere, even though skill and practice might take him quite a way.

In February he read, enjoyed, and immediately produced a short skit on Rider Haggard's *She*. Also articles by "A Scotch School Inspector"—one knows where he got that from—and "A Distressed Young Gentleman." In February, also—Messrs. Blackwood having

at last declined and disgorged the manuscript of *Better Dead*—he fired it in at Messrs. Kegan Paul; who were as quick as Blackwood had been slow, but were equally positive in their decision.

In March he was "A Child of Six" in the *St. James's* and "A Man About Town" in the *Dispatch*. In April he was dealing with *The Third Sex*—who would appear to have been actors—in Scotland, and got a set of verses (as poor as ever, but for once actually signed "J.M.B.") past Greenwood in London. In May—but all these are only examples from the output—the *St. James's* published *How to Make Love to an Actress*, "by One who Knows." Isn't this Sentimental Tommy in thought, word and deed?

Towards the end of the month he took another three days in Edinburgh, seeing editors, discussing the possibility of re-writing *The Vagabond Students* for a projected weekly, snatching (one can only imagine) the *Dispatch's* ticket for a play starring Miss Mary Anderson, and once more writing a theatrical notice as in the days of the *Courant*. So on to Kirriemuir, with ideas still buzzing, and two at least of them of such particular significance that we, also, are lucky to find references in a letter to Gilmour.

"Have been to kirk twice to-day," runs the relevant extract, "(an old fellow-student preaching, cunning, a donkey) and thought out a title, 'When a Man's Single.' Nothing fixed. Riach would have had things daily, but have so far only done two. The Free Assembly of next year the subject. Frighfully profane (see Thursday and Saturday). Great pains taken in the family to conceal authorship."

We learn, then, that it was in the South Free Church, in May, '87, that he first thought of what was to be the first, and almost real, full-length novel. But we also learn something that he certainly couldn't have guessed. For in Edinburgh, as chance would have it, there was at this moment—on a brief visit of his own—no other than William Robertson Nicoll. He brought a copy of the *Dispatch*. He read one of the "frighfully profane" articles, and though he also had been a Free Church minister—and was cunning, if you like, but no donkey—he read it again, and this time with a distinct editorial sparkle in both eyes. This is such an important turning-point, as they say in histories, that part of another biography must now step in.

## II

Nicoll, who was now in his thirty-sixth year, was the son of a minister in Aberdeenshire—another tremendous book-lover—and as outstanding an instance of the triumph of Scottish character and education over the customary obstacle of poverty as any in the long and impressive list. After bursting through his parish school, Aberdeen grammar school, and a considerable part of his father's astonishingly and almost inexplicably vast library, he had matriculated at Aberdeen University at the age of fifteen, and graduated four years later. Two years after that—already, and while pursuing his theological studies, a regular literary contributor to the *Aberdeen Journal*—he received his licence to preach. In 1874 he was ordained Free Church Minister at Dufftown, in Banffshire. In 1877 he was transferred to the Free Church at Kelso, where he married, had two children, earned a growing and widening reputation for his sermons, and turned out articles on books and religion with equally steady success. All this looked like being his life work, and might have been, but for an alarming breakdown in health towards the end of 1885. His lungs were threatened—there had been tragic warnings of this weakness in his family—and doctors' orders insisted that he should move south. End of Part One, and of the years in the ministry; but by no means of Robertson Nicoll.

He came to Norwood, which in those days was still an almost rural London suburb. He was tough. He recovered. But there was no problem, once his spirit and stamina had saved him, in earning rather more than a livelihood, for already he held such weight with the important evangelical publishing firm of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton that they had appointed him, while still in Scotland, as editor of their religious weekly, the *Expositor*.

That wasn't to be all, nor anything like it. Without as yet even considering his long and influential career as practitioner and godfather in the world of letters, by the time he paid that brief visit to Edinburgh he had already for six months been editor of a much better-known periodical which he had founded himself. Hodder and Stoughton, fairly cunning in their own line, may never have known how far this tiny colossus—for if ever there had been a little minister, it was Nicoll—was cracking his whip over them and how far they were ring-masters themselves. But the association was richly

productive for both parties, and was seldom to be more so than when, in November, 1886, they published the first number of the *British Weekly*. Sub-title: *A Journal of Social and Christian Progress*. Price, one penny. H. & S. supplying all capital and business organisation. Nicoll with a completely free hand in everything else.

The paper was an almost immediate success, and in its heyday, which came soon and lasted long, it was easily the leader in its own field. It was informative, pure as snow, supported and paid valuable, constant tribute to all better kinds of literature, and—in the words of its editor—treated everything in a Christian spirit. There was a lot of Christian or at any rate of deeply sabbatarian spirit abroad in those days, and Nicoll was far too clever a journalist to play off any one sect or division against the others. He got them all, and their pennies as well. He was fierce, autocratic, and delighted in his own power. But there can be no doubt that where he chose to praise or push, the public for many years would follow him like lambs. For some reason his own weekly columns were signed "Claudius Clear"; but this never concealed his identity; it only, in the mysterious manner of pseudonyms, made his pronouncements more pontifical. He could also be extraordinarily kind, so long as it was quite plain that he was top dog. Disagreement, even from the highest quarters, he regarded as mutiny. Taking him all round—though if anyone really wishes to do that, they should read his life and letters—he was a very strange little clergyman indeed.

What he thought he had discovered in Edinburgh that day was an unknown writer who could put the contemporary equivalent of a kick into the treatment of Scottish church affairs. He wrote to Riach, who passed him on to Barrie, and terms were quickly arranged. On July 1st there appeared in the *British Weekly* an essay on our old friend Dr. Alexander Whyte. "By an Outsider," it said, but it was also signed by the name of "Gavin Ogilvy," which as you should all know was presently to be the real, but secret and hidden, name of the authentic Little Minister himself. Why did he do this? Why, one wonders, when at last he could have used his own signature, did he go out of his way to call himself something else? Was it that at this great moment he hesitated to cast off anonymity, the cloak under which he had sheltered so comfortably and invisibly since the days of the *Nottingham Journal*? Was it that old and constant preference, which would follow him into fiction, for pretending that he was anything but what he was? Or

did he know well enough—though Nicoll didn't—that he could no more go on writing about Scottish divines and Free Assemblies than about mathematics or science?

He had been asked to do it, and he did it—once. The name, it may have been, served to give him a loop-hole, for J. M. Barrie could never go forward if he set off with the wrong foot first. But the article made a hit with his new readers, and Nicoll was clamouring for more. Either so much good-will had been established in one issue that it mustn't be thrown away, or else we have yet another example of Barrie, with one of those quiet and rueful smiles, just sticking to what he had interpreted as the rules of the game. He had started as Gavin Ogilvy, and as Gavin Ogilvy—in the *British Weekly* at any rate—he was content to go on. Not to the end, when his own name had become too valuable, but all the time that Nicoll was still helping to build him up. As he did, loyally, hectoringly, and at the very top of his voice—though he had discovered, in a matter of days from the submission of the first contribution, that his new Scotch ecclesiastical expert simply didn't exist.

Do you know what the second article, on July 8th, was about? One can still almost feel the clash between Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton's amazing little literary war-lord and the still more amazing little journalist who sent it in. It was the armoured gladiator against the net-thrower, though, and perhaps, after all, the actual impact was hardly felt. Barrie won, of course. The article—which was about the new house-boat which he and Gilmour had just taken at Molesey—was as light as it was invincible. Nicoll retreated in good order, without having to admit that he was beaten, and would waste a lot of time, while this particular form of association lasted, in trying to advance or at least to stand firm. Sometimes he would think that he had done it, and especially he would think so when in after years he could point to Barrie as one of his finds. But there was no more about the Scotch Church—except when treated precisely as the contributor chose. Three editors now, two in London and one in Edinburgh, all expecting and receiving material every week. If this wasn't the summer when he told an old friend in Scotland that he was now making the best part of eight hundred pounds a year, it must have been getting very near it. We know, of course, where a lot of it was going, for his father had retired now, and his mother—wasn't that the whole point of it?—must have everything that she could be induced to take. But there

was much less extravagance about the second house-boat—moored off the then entirely countrified Tagg's Island—and little fear now but that all three editors were bound hand and foot.

Peaceful and delicious glimpse into the eighties. Boats, punts, flannels and straw hats, bustles and parasols, a little water-side inn, paper lanterns again in the evenings, laughter and leisure; such a safe, happy, summer-time world. Friends coming and going for odd nights, or staying and playing games on a Sunday. Gilmour—amphibious in two senses now—up in London most days (like all the male members of the flotilla), as journalist or private secretary. Maggie Barrie as guest for a while, or, when other women were expected, as hostess. Her brother smoking, walking, writing, musing, as warm, sweet-scented hours slipped by. Musing particularly over a cow in a neighbouring field, which found its way into more than one article, but not always as a cow. For its qualities and characteristics struck him as so admirably exemplifying the best in womanhood that he used it as a model for a little sketch in dialogue about a pretty girl. This was a thought that often seems to have returned; it nearly got into a play once, while in *The Little White Bird* we find, suddenly and rather startlingly, the same creature being likened to one of his idealised mothers. It must be admitted, however, that for some reason few, if any, women have ever really welcomed this particular form of compliment.

Something else was being started now, during those busy and profitable days on the Thames. The notion of reviving *The Vagabond Students* for the Scotch weekly had fallen through, but fiction was calling, despite the unanimous coldness shown by publishers to *Better Dead*, and the title which had come to him in church in Kirriemuir had slowly, and then swiftly, developed the outline of a plot. He was going to write a novel again. Perhaps, this time, it was going to turn into the big novel. Or perhaps not; but at any rate he had begun it, and Nicoll, it seems, was already so firmly anchored that he undertook to serialise it in the *British Weekly* with only a fragmentary sample in hand. *When A Man's Single*; that was the one. It set off in the oddest possible manner, for what was to turn before long into nothing but lightness, humour, and flashes of autobiography, with a couple of long chapters of almost unbearable tragedy—all about a little girl of four being drowned—decorated with Scotch dialogue of which the greater part was entirely irrelevant. It is an interesting point that "Wheens" had

now—so far as can be discovered for the first time—given place to “Thrums;” which was the name (in case there should still be anyone who doesn’t know it) for the short lengths of the Scottish weavers’ yarns. And it is also interesting to see the author balancing himself so precariously when three years later, in *The Little Minister*, he might sometimes totter, but would never be in any real danger of a fall. He fell this time, though. Right through those first two heartless and heavy chapters he was walking the plank; and at the end of them—to the immense relief of his readers, in any case—the serious novelist just vanishes with a splash.

Comes up again at once; cheerfully, and as a gossip, a satirist, a comedian, and occasionally almost a clown. Nottingham saves him, and his hero, who is again an ambitious Scotch journalist—“at this period in his career it made him turn white to think that he might not yet be famous”—is plunged into adventures on a provincial newspaper. What about the plot? It seems, by this time, that almost anything will do. There is a beautiful girl, but with considerably less character than any ruminant. And a beautiful baronet, who presently surprises the author perhaps even more than the reader by turning out to be an impostor. We move on to London, and there is Noble Simms—bless his heart!—who is really the heroine’s brother (there is actually a perfectly solemn scene where the hero sees him kissing her, creeps miserably away, and is run over by a hansom cab), but is far more important to us for his glorious methods of writing for the Press. And then, of course, we all go off to a house-boat at Tagg’s Island, and somehow enough of the threads are hustled into a happy ending; so happy, in fact, that in a kind of epilogue in Thrums again there are now only comedy, mockery, and farce.

Technically the whole thing isn’t merely still almost shapeless, but is sometimes almost criminal in its disregard of quite elementary rules. Everything, for instance, is supposed to be seen through the hero’s eyes, but whenever the author feels like it he doesn’t hesitate to shove in a scene behind his back. He pads, rambles, contradicts himself, is utterly reckless with coincidence, and drags in anything, however distant or incongruous, that will gain him another laugh. Yet the laughs are there; for happiness bubbles out of *When A Man’s Single*, his own queer quality colours everything, and even if its charm now lies so largely in its unconscious sense of the period, it is of course ridiculous to bring the heavy guns of criticism to

bear on a story that hardly ever ceases to entertain. It is a book, also, with fascinating descriptions of contemporary journalism, as well as with sudden, striking sentences that will be remembered long after the plot and characters have faded away.

"He was in danger of thinking that the journalist's art is to write readably, authoritatively and always in three paragraphs on a subject he knows nothing about."

"It was one of those awful moments in men's lives when they allow, face to face, that they like each other."

"'My God!' he groaned, 'I would write an article, I think, on my mother's coffin!'"

That last is from Noble Simms, of course; and, once more, it is Noble Simms who lifts the concoction clean out of the ruck. He gives the literary show away, and we love him every time he does it. For the literary show, though no one, deep-down underneath, had a greater respect for his own calling, was always to this curious author at least three parts a game.

*When A Man's Single* ran in the *British Weekly*, and still as by Gavin Ogilvy, from the autumn of 1887 to the spring of 1888—but the articles were accompanying it all the time—and of course, once Nicoll had started it, he was virtually compelled to see it through. He never knew, any more than Barrie, what was coming next, for there was never, after the first two chapters, more than the next instalment in hand. Sometimes—like Greenwood, but with even more vigour and violence—he complained of what he was getting, begged for modifications, or insisted, when they weren't forthcoming, that the story should rush forward to an early end. Quite useless. The author was enjoying himself, and the development of the original scenario was now far beyond his control. He was enjoying the dialogue, which had been kept, with increasing difficulty, out of so many of the recent articles and essays. He was enjoying the fun of gently lampooning his friends, or the eminent, or well-known institutions in which there was always something to be ridiculed. The big novel had again, it was all too clear, suffered a postponement, but at any rate he was managing the length this time, for *When A Man's Single* runs to eighty thousand words. As



to its qualifications for appearing in a Journal of Social and Christian progress, they would certainly take some finding. Yet the *British Weekly's* circulation was still soaring, and even if Nicoll were bewildered by his bargain, it was doing neither him nor his readers one pennyworth of harm.

In August Gilmour took his real holiday; not on the house-boat, however, but in Wales. For now it wasn't only Barrie who was in love. Marriott Watson, for instance, was deep in the toils of a tremendous though rather complicated affair—out of which his small friend extracted quite a number of articles and guineas. But Gilmour, more simply and straightforwardly, had found a lode-star as simple and straightforward as himself. Miss Elizabeth Keltie, only daughter of John Scott Keltie, another Scotchman, and at this time librarian to the Royal Geographical Society. It was Joseph Thomson who, in May this year, had first taken him to Keltie's house at Highgate—to which the pretty daughter had also just returned from abroad—and the romance began at once. When the Kelties took their summer holiday, Gilmour followed them, and by the beginning of September the young couple were engaged. As yet there could only be thoughts and dreams of marriage, for even with the hard-working double life that he was leading, Gilmour's income was still small, and love and friendship between the girl and her parents made separation something to be approached with anything but haste. It was an engagement, though. Not much doubt about that. And Barrie on his house-boat not only worked it into more articles and lifted details for *When A Man's Single*, but—having also met the Kelties—had now an almost direct connection with as many explorers as he liked. Thomson was still for him the greatest of them, but he listened to and poured out his admiration before them all. Particularly, during this particular summer, on Paul Belloni du Chaillu—more notes and articles here—the strange and strange-looking Frenchmen who first discovered pygmies and gorillas. It is said that when he lectured on the latter before the British Association, the members were unable to believe him, and that in his passion at this sceptical attitude he spat in their distinguished faces. He was quite one of the ugliest men there has ever been, and as his English was as extraordinary as his appearance, it was often almost impossible to understand what he was trying to say. Furthermore, he was twenty-five years older than Barrie; but he couldn't and didn't attempt to escape. He had to let himself be

worshipped, and in September—what do you think of this for the power of the spell?—he took part in the first of the long series of queer cricket-matches in which the tiny captain led his own team into the field.

It was at Shere, the lovely little village not far from Guildford, which for a year or more had been a favourite goal for the long walks. Meredith knew it well, had once lived there, and may easily have been the first—for he, also, was a great walker still—to show Barrie the way. It had its local cricket team, and watching them a new ambition grew. To take part again in this favourite of all games, to issue a challenge, to bring down his own eleven, and with it something of the golden, care-free spirit of summer days in Kirriemuir and Dumfries. He approached his friends, he wheedled, and he won. Not the match, for though much encouraged by the elderly appearance of the village side, he had selected his own lot for anything but their experience or skill. That was the joke, in fact, in this first contest and nearly all that followed. Scrupulous attention to the laws, and as far as possible to the customs, but a game within a game for the captain at any rate. To see his friends making fools of themselves under his orders. To frighten them beforehand, laugh at them afterwards, but never to let them off. A very few stood back, and were too proud or self-conscious to oblige in this way. But a surprising number of surprising characters did their worst and utmost over and over again, and were rewarded with fun at the time and memories afterwards. Occasionally they would meet an equally outrageous aggregation, or a real cricketer would join them, and an actual victory would ensue. But at Shere, in this summer of 1887, they were not unnaturally wiped out.

In the stern search for accuracy, and with *The Greenwood Hat* once more as a dangerously doubtful guide, it seems impossible now to be quite certain whether, as some say, there were two matches this season, or if the second—in which, according to Barrie, they impressed a couple of strangers at the last moment, and triumphed—took place in the following year. A haze conceals too much of these earliest outings, but on the whole it looks as if neither Bernard Partridge nor Jerome K. Jerome was actually implicated in the first of all. This eleven, however—nearly all of them authors, though few, if any, of them cricketers—certainly included Gilmour and Marriott Watson, with Joseph Thomson and du Chaillu in its very long tail. Neither of the explorers had ever handled a bat before,

and there was widespread confusion as to how it should be employed. Thomson turned out in pyjamas. Du Chaillu, constantly under some curious illusion that the game was over, was as constantly having to be hauled back on to the field. The visitors won the toss, but by this time—and the decision was accepted with every sign of relief—it seemed far better to give them an object-lesson by putting the home side in first. Unfortunately, however, one of the Shere men was a left-hander, which not only led to chaos among the novices, but to the mutinous notion that their leader was still ignorant of the rules. Yet somehow the wickets fell—all of them, in the end—though a handsome score, as one may imagine, had been made. After an interval for refreshments the challengers advanced, and also retired, in swift succession. Gilmour made five. The whole of the rest of the team contributed, including extras, another six. Total, eleven; and conclusion of this technically disastrous encounter. Back, by wagonette and train, to London, accompanied by their female supporters; all laughing; all—except one—wondering what on earth had made them do it; all saying that they must do it again, but only their captain irresistibly determined that they should.

Not this season, perhaps—and how soon they actually met again is, as we say, without positive record—but if any of them supposed that he had exhausted this form of pleasure, or would spare them if he wanted them on the next occasion, they were profoundly mistaken. He had taken ten grown-up men, with some of whom he was on anything but intimate terms, had changed them into boys again for one whole, long day, and had been their acknowledged and undisputed chief. This was happiness, and time, for once, must certainly bring it again. So, as the season comes round, we shall find him organising, issuing summonses, dragging his friends and acquaintances from their work or business, and leading them forth in summer weather to laugh, to exhibit their skill or incompetence, and to regain their youth. An enviable company. An incomparable captain. What fun they all had in the years that can never return.

As for his own prowess—if that is the right word for it—one might tabulate it in some such manner as this. He knew everything about the theory of cricket, and could have chosen and directed the best team in the world. His slow, left-handed bowling—possibly the slowest that has yet been seen—was subtle, accurate, and mad-deningly effective. His right-handed batting—for in games where

both arms are employed he was always a right-hander—was almost uniformly unsuccessful. But perhaps his greatest distinction was the astounding courage with which he faced the fastest or most incalculable ball. For in those matches, as can well be imagined, it might appear from anywhere or at any velocity, and imperil any part of one's person. He never flinched. He hardly troubled to dodge. His calm was spectacular, and no violent or unexpected blow was ever seen to disturb it. It was the others who gasped, yelled, or shuddered, but never Barrie. Indomitable; there can be no other epithet to sum up the cricketing spirit in that small and fragile frame.

It was on this first day, also, that his team received its name. On the way down from Waterloo, discussion arose on the point, and the captain—who, now that it was much too late, felt a certain anxiety about their prospects—asked his two explorers what was the "African" for "Heaven help us." Thomson suggested "Allahakbar," and this word was immediately adopted. They arrived at Shere as the Allahakbars, and the next development was inevitable. "The Allahakbarries," said somebody, sooner or later, and the amendment swept the original name away. Later on they had their own colours, banquets, and books. And as late as the summer of 1913 the captain turned out in his cap and blazer for a last revival with something of the old happiness and fun.

Autumn coming on now, and back to Grenville Street. Thoughts of moving, from lodgings into real chambers; but nothing entirely suitable could be discovered, and for the moment a decision was postponed. Work still going on like anything for the three editors, for the *Scotsman*, and for other papers when time allowed. An idea that had been caught in passing was for a series of sketches of his old Edinburgh professors, and he was making notes and collecting material, though the actual writing hadn't yet begun. There was a letter from the editor of *Chambers's Journal*—which he had known as a boy—asking for short stories on the lines of *When A Man's Single*; encouraging, though nothing seems to have come of it. But the greatest interest now, and far the biggest thrill, was in the forthcoming appearance—printed and bound at last—of *Better Dead*.

No publisher had accepted it, though many had had the chance. But its parent was obstinate, and determined that his child should live. He did something against which, as a future President of the

Society of Authors, he should certainly have set his face. He took it to a firm called Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey, & Co., of Paternoster Square—though they actually specialised in anything but this class of literature—and arranged for it to be issued at his own expense. This probably meant putting up about a hundred pounds, and as it was to be published at the price and in the format of a shilling shocker, only a very considerable sale could ever bring the money back. There it was, though. Nothing would stop him, and he went ahead. He commissioned the William Mitchell whose name appears in that old Edinburgh diary—and who had been at Dumfries with him, too—to design the cover, which is reproduced (so that you should have seen it) as an illustration to *The Greenwood Hat*. For it was to be a bookstall book, and rope, pistol, and dagger were almost essential to compete with the rest of the display and to catch the hasty eye. Another interesting point, of course, and indicating the almost Arcadian tempo of the period, is that one could write a topical travesty in September and October, 1886, and still find it topical in November, 1887. More luck? Undoubtedly. Or at any rate, a particular adaptability between the author and his age.

November 19th was the great day, and nothing else, as he awoke that morning, could be of the least importance to anyone on earth. There was a political crisis in France, a meeting of Emperors in Berlin, and special constables were still standing by in London after the rioting last Sunday in Trafalgar Square. Never mind about all that. There was a book on sale to-day bearing the words "By J. M. Barrie;" a real book, even though it was in paper boards and priced at a shilling; and it was this line that he had read a hundred times since his advance copies had arrived, that he read again as he dressed, and that was burning in his pocket as he set forth to prowl hopefully wherever the little volume was displayed.

In other words, he was every young author on this day of days, and like every young author he hoped that fame and fortune would now come to him at once. The book never left him, and for a week at least he was always pulling it out and falling into a stupor of admiration over it himself. If anyone praised it, he frankly agreed with them, for not yet had he learnt—with a book, at any rate—to grunt or change the conversation when tributes were laid at his feet. He had taken pains, moreover, to employ his own influence with the Press, and by this means—but also because times were different then, books were fewer, and reviewing much more thorough—

there was soon a large collection of cuttings in his pocket as well. He found them "mostly complimentary and stupid," which is probably to say that he didn't find them quite complimentary enough. In December, however, there was a second impression. And something else, rather special and tremendous, which for the moment almost completely satisfied the hunger in his soul.

Lord Randolph Churchill, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer—his last office—when the book was written, and had been geyed in it quite as impertinently as any of the other figure-heads, wrote to say how much he had been tickled and amused. Fireworks in Grenville Street, for this was more like it, and whatever the rest of the nation might be thinking of that incalculable statesman, for one little author he was now the greatest and soundest of the lot. This, indeed, was the right kind of reception for *Better Dead*.

In truth, however, the Thames and other rivers remained as incombustible as ever. The second impression lingered on the book-stalls, and all too soon a fresh batch of rather less unconventional shockers had taken its place. More than three years later, when five much more successful works by the same author had followed it, there was a third edition, and there have been six more, in England alone, since then. So that when he tells us, as he does in *The Greenwood Hat*, that he lost about twenty-five pounds over it, it would seem that he was only thinking of its first and independent life. That was undoubtedly brief and disappointing, with just enough appreciation to leave him exasperated that there wasn't more, but with not nearly enough to encourage him to try the same kind of thing again. Later he was ashamed of it—which he needn't have been, for with all its crudities it is as much pure Barrie as anything he ever wrote—and only in the last phase did he come to look on it with kindlier affection, as part of the early history over which he smiled and brooded in his old age. It meant a very great deal to him at the time, though; and among other things that he must still be a journalist until somehow, by some happier experiment, he could earn his escape.

His sister Maggie was again with him that December, but for Christmas and the New Year they both returned—once more with a couple of nights in Edinburgh—to Kirriemuir. The inhabitants, who had been reading his little volume, reported that it was clever, but that they were unable to understand it. If one stops to think,

there was no particular reason why they should. Yet there was a secret consolation, and the author had far from finished with them yet. Nicoll had got Hodder and Stoughton to undertake, at their own expense this time, a new volume for the spring. It was to consist of the Auld Licht articles from the *St. James's*, which he was busily and secretly re-writing, of a couple more which had appeared, last August and September, in the *British Weekly*, and of a kind of short story which amused him enormously but hadn't yet found a home. This, in the intervals of fresh articles, was his work that Christmas in the little room to the left of the porch at Strath View.

There was also time for a letter to Gilmour.

"... I send *St. J.'s* cheque. You might send me the money in gold in a registered envelope. The odd shillings can wait. Bank-notes are a nuisance here and they approach all strange cheques as forgeries.

"... Have a headache, so won't write more. By the way you might take my 'Hard Hit' picture to that shop of yours and get it framed. I left it in the wardrobe. A decent sort of oak frame or anything else that promises well will do. About 10/- or so . . ."

That was on January 4th, 1888. We have no idea what the picture represented, and mustn't be too easily tempted into thoughts of cricket. But again we almost prostrate ourselves before Gilmour's unending good-nature. The odd shillings can wait, indeed! They can, can they? All right. Yet it is clear enough that generous little Barrie has the keenest sense of his own importance, whatever the world or his native town may have thought of *Better Dead*. We don't say it unkindly, or we hope not. We're just thinking that this is a quality which no one who is going where that next book will start taking him can possibly do without.

He spent another fortnight in his old home, and then came south. No wrench in returning to Grenville Street, yet always now a stab of hidden terror at the moment of farewell. His father, though nearly seventy-three now, was still in almost robust physical health. But his mother—sixty-eight last September—had been a semi-invalid for twenty years; ever since her little David's death; ever since her little Jamie had sworn to take his place. It is impossible, at this distance, to say how far she had welcomed this life of suffering and surrender, or how much resistance she might have offered if this had been her will. But at least she had never been called upon to bear her burden alone. Jane Ann was still there, with twenty years

of uncomplaining service—so uncomplaining that even when it was remembered, it was accepted as her natural fate. This was the real saint and true martyr, who might have been saved, but chose what she saw as her unalterable duty instead. Forty last spring, or in those days a middle-aged woman. Not strong herself, except in spirit. Alone now, oftener than not, with her parents, for of her two unmarried sisters Sara was now housekeeping for their uncle at Motherwell, and Maggie was always visiting the far-flung family. If her little brother could, as he did, make economic circumstances easier, that was one fear gone and she was proud and grateful. But her slavery was something that he had known and accepted almost as far back as he could remember. It was his mother, always, who called for his pity and everyone's care.

And she was a real invalid now, as she neared seventy. Her coughs and headaches had frightened them all for years, but there was a new anxiety in her old age. Her memory was beginning to weaken; simply, there can be little doubt, from some circulatory trouble—the same which was waiting for so many of her children when they, too, grew old—but it was alarming and harrowing for all who saw it, and there was a word that haunted them, though it never passed their lips. Physically, also, she was growing feeble, and with a constant vulnerability to bronchitis there would be scare after scare. She lived nearly another eight years after this, but always as a guarded flame—with that one, devoted guardian—and time and again through this period her son Jamie would be sent for, and come hurrying, panic-stricken, to her side. Always he dreaded the telegram which might tell him that his arrival would be too late, and through all his fun and success in London we must always picture this fear at the back of his mind. He had set her so high. His determination to be the perfect son to her was so deep-rooted, and absorbing, and intense. But he had to leave her, not only because another voice was calling, but because it was essential that still more success should be poured into her lap. There was no choice, and again we remember the boast that he could make when she was dead. "Everything I could do for her in this life I have done since I was a boy; I look back through the years and I cannot see the smallest thing undone." But it was Jane Ann, nevertheless, of whom this was even truer. And Jane Ann had always to remain behind.

So by the middle of January he was back with Gilmour in Gren-



ville Street, writing hard for all his editors, outwardly philosophic about the sales of his first book, and putting the finishing touches to the manuscript of the second. Nearly every Sunday he set forth, with his fellow-lodger, to spend the day with the Kelties at Highgate; where he not only continued to meet more explorers, but to challenge the whole party at various indoor games. His skill at Tiddleywinks was outstanding. He was amazing and unequalled at throwing cards into a hat. He conjured a little, too, at which there was more laughter and admiration. All this, one may say, was to show the company that even if he couldn't lead expeditions to the equator, he still had gifts of his own. He chose his own ground—as he always did—and he beat the lot. But of course they didn't only find him strange, but amusing and lovable. In all of which discoveries their judgment was entirely correct.

Happy Sundays, not only for the engaged couple. More fun with the growing circle in London. But the greatest joy of all for the little adept in left-handed dexterity was when Hodder and Stoughton started sending him his proofs. Some authors hate them; they hate the labour, the cold exposure of passages which have lost their virtue, or the necessity of re-reading what is now right out of their minds. But Barrie always loved them—it was only the finished book from which he ever turned aside—and though he wrote easily as soon as even part of the idea was there, he could have gone on revising for ever. In conversation he would have you believe that he despised the *mot juste*, or at any rate the writers who spoke of it seriously. But he was always seeking it, and the twist in a sentence which would double the meaning and halve the length. Later, of course, and especially with the plays, he could work over typewritten versions until something or somebody induced him to stop. But in the days of *Auld Licht Idylls*—for that was what the new volume was to be called—it had all to be done on a manuscript or a printed proof.

February, March, April. The final galleys, with their final corrections, had been extracted from him at last, and in April—in the familiar gilt-lettered, dark-blue buckram, and priced at six shillings—the book itself appeared. Dedicated, for which we need ask no reason, to Frederick Greenwood. Twelve chapters, totalling about fifty-thousand words; but not only of widely varying lengths—for in re-writing he had freed himself entirely from the laws that still govern articles—but, after an impressive and deceitful opening, with

little connection save the scene. Sometimes he is the schoolmaster of Glen Quharity, a character, apparently, of advanced years. Sometimes his identity is uncertain. Sometimes he is just an invisible author. The period of the different chapters wobbles, and topography, though it may have been clear in his own mind, is anything but clear to the reader. There is certainly a slightness and thinness about the whole volume. Little sense of construction. Patches of fine writing, patches of gossip, patches where a chapter seems almost to drift. In one place a paragraph that runs on for three pages without a break. And "Idylls." Why? Because he thought it was a good title, because he thought these sketches of meanness and even brutality idyllic, or because he was being ironical? The first seems much the most likely; yet if we get him on cock-fighting or funerals there isn't a hint that he is less callous than what he describes. As for irony, it was always one of his tools or weapons; but again and again there is something much blunter and more openly offensive in the treatment of his fellow-townspeople. In this book he almost seems to grudge them their good qualities. No wonder they resented it and even hated it—until pride in his later successes made them forgive even this.

But in England and London it was the newness and freshness that stood out; the lifting of the lid from scenes and lives of which most readers knew nothing. Here the mockery was flattering, the fun completely innocent and harmless, and the formlessness no particular drawback in a book so entirely unlike anything else. A Scotch village would obviously be peopled by curious and ridiculous characters, preoccupied with parsimony and religion. They recognised what they took to be the truth even more clearly, perhaps, than the strange quality of the author's workmanship and mind. They were amused and accepted him as a new humorist, with special Saxon relish in a Scotchman being a humorist at all. Thus they reviewed him, so that again he found them complimentary and stupid. Yet since for all they knew this was a flash in the pan from a practically unknown author, they were still some way from seeing what we see in *Auld Licht Idylls* to-day.

What's that? Barrie, of course, beginning to open his little box at last. Barrie—who for us has written so much more than this—away on the right track now. Stumbling a little; still, though there may always be a weakness here, not wholly distinguishing his own qualities from their defects. To us, in fact, it is bound to be a

preparation—and even at its best a halting and uncertain one—for what was to follow. But of course we have one rather interesting advantage as well; for we, with the other books and plays before us, can trace the details that are going to crop up and be used again.

First foreshadowing, for instance, in the very first chapter, of *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan*. First foreshadowing, in the second chapter, of the fate of Tommy Sandys and of the iron claw of Captain James Hook. Confusing appearance, a little later on, of the Reverend Mr. Dishart—confusing because when he turns into the Little Minister he will have the same name and be a different man. Possibly still more startling mention of Gavin Ogilvy as a poacher—was this a crack at the *British Weekly* or just the first name that came into the author's head? And so on, with a jumble of hints and suggestions all the way through, and indications of the stories and memories which would always be floating just under the surface of his mind. Yet Thrums—which at times can be Forfar or Dumfries, as well as Kirriemuir—is never the portrait of an actual or tangible little town. It was what he had been told, added to what he had overheard, plus guess-work, intuition, and that always rebellious pen. It is a fairyland, and in *Auld Licht Idylls* far more often an ugly than a beautiful one. But again it came at the right time and to the right public. It was educating them in the elements of Barrie. It was proof already that he could lead them into a world which didn't really exist. Presently he would be treating them even more tyrannically; and still there would be more and more to follow wherever he led.

Nevertheless, *Auld Licht Idylls* didn't, for the moment, attract outstanding attention, though again the author had employed his own influence with the Press. With Nicoll, and Hodder and Stoughton behind it, there would of course be strong and skilful pushing, and in those days all was by no means lost if you couldn't announce a third impression in the first week. It moved, it wasn't unnoticed, and it had useful and powerful friends. But it was a slight volume to go charging in among the big names of the season—Besant, Trollope, and Charles Reade were three of the old stagers with new offerings, while Rhoda Broughton was hot on their heels—and even Marriott Watson's first novel made more of an immediate splash. To have had two books published in less than six months, with hope of a third—if Hodder and Stoughton brought out *When A Man's Single*—in less than a year, was all very much in the right

direction and must almost inevitably help the author's name. But the first had left him out of pocket, the return from the second was still problematic, and at this moment there was still considerable uncertainty about the third. On with the articles, then, to keep the pot boiling. Topical or slyly autobiographical, as was now the established custom. But with a return also—for the *Idylls* had revived a lot of old thoughts and notes—to Scotland and the legends of his own town. Not many at first, for the material wasn't inexhaustible and there was still no insistent demand. But he kept thinking of them, and as he thought, another idea was presenting itself too.

Third shot at the big novel. Scene : Thrums. Title—written boldly in a note-book of this year—"Gavin Ogilvy." He couldn't keep away from it. It stood, somehow, for himself, his luck, and the whole interpretation of his mother's old stories. So Gavin Ogilvy was to be a minister this time. And there was to be a plot. There had got to be a plot if he was to escape the previous blind-alleys and pitfalls; and thus the notes set off—there are over four hundred of them in this little book alone—with fragments of scenes and situations, with bits about the heroine (who is called Babbie from the first), with snatches of melodrama beginning "Suppose Babbie does this," or "Suppose Gavin does that." There are short lines of dialogue or description, or little aphorisms about life and love, to be stored up and worked in, if possible, at the right place. Quite a number of the notes form a glossary of Scottish words and expressions, carefully garnered by one who might easily, by this time, have forgotten them or their meaning himself. It's impressive, this business-like and painstaking approach to his task. It will be nearly three years, though, before *The Little Minister* is finished. There is going to be a long, hard-fought struggle between an author and his ambition first.

Yet again that isn't all in the little pocket-book. We turn it round, so as to start at the other end, and here already are notes for a play about a house-boat and a barber. "The House-Boat Granny," it is to be called, and though the notes are fewer and still some way from making a complete story, there is a feeling somehow that they have come to him with much less labour and more ease. It isn't only that high spirits and absurdity are both now permissible. He is soaked in playgoing, and sees—far more vividly, one would say—exactly what he describes. This isn't so much ambition, though

he has always longed for the full right of entry to the stage-door, as experiment and fun. There is no weight on him—of what, for instance, Meredith will say—and brevity and impudence have always been his game. Yes, he seems to be going ahead with his little farcical comedy nicely, though it, also, must be laid aside for the daily journalism, and it will be nearly four years in this case before it suddenly romps into riotous success.

In June of this present year—1888—he went north again, partly so as to be present at Sandy Riach's wedding, and occupied some fraction of spare time in planning a serious critical article, which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* in October, on George Meredith's novels. Seventy-eight numbered notes went into this, and idolator as he was, it isn't entirely a panegyric. If it comes to that, it wasn't particularly illuminating or even particularly good. The pen seems a little nervous for once, as it passes out of its own, practised range. It can be heavy, and it can be trivial, but Barrie will never be really at his ease on this side of the literary fence.

We haven't quite finished with his work this summer, for in addition to everything else he was now thinking of expanding the three articles (published last year) on his Edinburgh instructors into a whole series which might form yet another book. Nicoll was to have them for the *British Weekly*, and to make Hodder and Stoughton take them on after that. This was the plan, which would presently go through. General title, at this stage, "Professors"; and as he could do nothing, apparently, without putting his whole back into it, we find, for a two-thousand-word article on Professor Tait, for instance, no less than sixty-five separate notes. The system may have become a habit, but it isn't, quite clearly, a habit into which one just drifts.

He was six weeks in Kirriemuir that summer—and again, though we know there was more cricket at Shere, we can't say whether it was earlier or later—but when he came south once more, it was to a new address. For some time both he and Gilmour had had an eye on it, and during his absence it was Gilmour who had arranged the move. To a set of chambers at Number 7, Furnivals Inn, off Holborn, which like so many buildings of that nature has long since been torn down and replaced; in this instance by the big, red head-office of the Prudential Assurance Company. Though it had once been an Inn of Chancery, it had lost this distinction many years ago, and for many years, also, the north side of its courtyard had

been occupied by the hotel which is mentioned (by an earlier tenant) in *Edwin Drood*. It was still, however, faintly collegiate in character, with a porter at the main entrance and each separate section described as a "stair." The sets consisted of two or three rooms—three in this case—and dusting and bed-making were in the hands of elderly so-called laundresses, though at Number 7 there was also some attendance by a boy, one of the porter's sons. A step-up, it would seem, from lodgings, with your own door to bolt at night. Cosy, if a little shabby. Unless it was a sub-tenancy the sets were let unfurnished, and for not more than about thirty pounds a year. These are the quarters which form so much of the background to *My Lady Nicotine*, and when Barrie first went there, Gilmour—though it was he who provided the furniture—was again away. In fact, although technically sharing them, he seems to have been here very little after this, and by the end of November, when at last he ceased to be a bachelor, they reverted to Barrie alone. But that's looking ahead a bit. In mid-August, when he first arrived from Scotland, something much less pleasant and promising was on his mind.

There was a crisis on the *St. James's Gazette*. For the past two years, as a matter of fact, Greenwood had had a series of minor disputes and difficulties with a new principal proprietor. A few months ago he had persuaded him to dispose of his interests, but in a very short while it became clear that his successor was going to interfere in the editorial side of the paper even more. Just as, eight years earlier, Greenwood had retired from the *Pall Mall*, so now he abandoned the *St. James's*. But this time there was no general secession; the staff remained, and Sidney Low, the assistant editor, stepped straight into his place and stayed there. Nor, this time, did Greenwood—who was now fifty-eight—find fresh backing which would enable him to start yet a third Gazette. On the contrary, he was now a free-lance himself, and save for a brief and unsuccessful attempt, about three years later, to run a weekly paper called the *Anti-Jacobin*, he was never an editor again. His name still carried weight, and he continued as an independent contributor for a long while yet. But it is hard for any ex-editor to work under others, and it was impossible for Greenwood to modify his sincere but not always welcome opinions. During the Boer War he found himself on the unpopular side, and parted company with *Blackwood's*, in which he had been expressing his views. After this, from the age of seventy until his death in 1909, he was in almost complete

eclipse. A retired journalist, with neither influence nor savings, Poor Greenwood the Great.

His rash, honourable action, however, was a blow to Barrie in this August of '88. He saw—though as it turned out he was wrong—the end of his association with the *St. James's*, and the necessity of making up his income elsewhere. "Good thing," he writes to Gilmour (enclosing a bunch of cheques as usual, and a Postal Order for thirty shillings), "there are other irons in the fire. Had encouraging enough letter from Mudford to-day." W. H. Mudford was the editor of the *Standard*. But this wasn't to prove the chief iron, and his luck, as it happened, still held. Enter, just about this moment, William Ernest Henley.

Aged thirty-nine. Tall, burly, bearded, boisterous invalid and cripple—he had had a tubercular foot amputated when still quite a young man, had nearly lost the other, and his whole life was a battle against bouts of ill-health. A giant in courage and industry. Close friend, when they weren't arguing or even quarrelling, of Robert Louis Stevenson. Poet, journalist, encyclopædist, art-critic, playwright, essayist, lexicographer, anthologist, and editor. Another of those who never really made it all pay, but a big figure, in both senses, in his own literary generation and a great discoverer of talent in more than one world. By this time he had already edited *London*, which had first printed the *New Arabian Nights*, and the *Magazine of Art*, which had fought valiantly on behalf of Whistler and Rodin. Now he was up in Edinburgh, planning—with Walter Blaikie of Constable's—a new sixpenny weekly, the *Scots Observer*, which was to combine patriotic imperialism with his other interests; and when Barrie found that he had still more to say about Meredith, here, in Meredith's friend, was the obvious editor to choose.

A new door opened, just as it seemed that the door to the *St. James's* might shut. *The Lost Works of George Meredith*, a determined and successful effort to resuscitate material which the public had overlooked (but this was still rather like the mouse helping the lion), appeared in the first issue; and thereafter he contributed over and over again. Writing for Henley, or, indeed, having anything to do with him, was always apt to involve either a clash of personalities or discreet suppression of one's own point of view, and even Barrie—at once the most stubborn and elusive of all antagonists—sometimes met the full force of a tempestuous outburst. Yet they valued each other, all the time there was something more than

affection on both sides, and here—though financially the paper was almost always in peril—was the focus of more concentrated promise and brilliance than in any other sixpennyworth of the age. Here was an editor big enough to combine the giving of his own best with appreciation of the best of others. He didn't only direct; he inspired, encouraged, or, if he thought it necessary, wrestled with his contributors. Literature was the breath of life to him, and for its sake he was both tyrant and slave. Consider some of the names in his pages during the five or six years that he conducted the *Scots Observer* in Edinburgh and its subsequent child or brother, the *National Observer*, in London. R. L. S., Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Andrew Lang, T. E. Brown, Arthur Morrison, Gilbert Parker, Murray Gilchrist, G. S. Street, G. W. Stevens, Marriot Watson, W. B. Yeats, and of course, though here also a good deal of his work was still anonymous, J. M. Barrie. To be one of "Henley's young men" in those days was in itself an accolade, and there was no *fin-de-siècle* bloodlessness in either of the two *Observers*. Roaring iconoclasm and violent enthusiasm were their constant watchwords, coupled on the political side with a high Toryism in which even its enemies must take a secret and fearful joy. A strange medium, you may say, for the little Scotch author and journalist, who as long as there was a real Liberal party always regarded himself as in its ranks; but to whom, on the other hand, ink and self-expression were so far more important than constitutions and laws. In another couple of years, for instance, we shall find him writing, simultaneously and quite happily, for the *National Observer* and its extreme political antithesis, the *Speaker*. For it was the writing that mattered, and Henley knew this, and they were friends.

There was another friend; a close friend in these busy years and then, after a long interval in which their lives spread apart, a closer friend than ever at the end. Charles Whibley, exactly five months older than Barrie, and Henley's assistant-editor throughout. Scholar, man of letters, wit, expert on wine and food, a mass of rugged prejudice, and one of the most glorious, inspiring, and much-loved companions that the world has known. In this circle—Henley, Whibley, and some of the younger of the young men—Barrie found other wings beginning to grow. There was the kind of talk that he had always been waiting for, there was the feeling that he was now really one of them, and that they were accepting



him both for his work and himself. It made him look inward, too, give much deeper consideration to his own capabilities, and determine more than ever first to be worthy of this kind of promotion, and secondly to go ahead until he could look back on it from the real peaks.

You know, also—for it is a story that has now often been told—of Henley's little daughter Margaret, the only child, who was born the year after the *Scots Observer* and died when she was only five. The loveliest of little creatures, worshipped by her parents, and from the moment that he first saw her by Barrie, too. In *The Greenwood Hat* he tells us of her sitting on her father's lap, in Edinburgh, as he strums the piano for her, or dancing gaily round the room. When the Henleys moved to London, Barrie was a frequent visitor at their Battersea flat, and by this time the child was old enough to fall under his charm—as he from the beginning had fallen under hers. They played together, and her name for him was first "Friendly" and then "Friendly-wendy" or sometimes just "Wendy" alone. So when, ten years after her death, he was writing the play of *Peter Pan*, the word came back into his mind and for the first time Wendy was a girl. Not for the last, as all over the world there must now be thousands of them, and perhaps there always will be, though how many will have heard of little Margaret Henley? She is the child "Reddy," also, in the early chapters of *Sentimental Tommy*, with the literary father "whose beard licked the table when he wrote." No other little girl would ever really take her place.

In September—still 1888—the new editor of the *St. James's* showed his authority by returning several articles, though later, as has been hinted, he had better sense. The connection wasn't broken, even though at the time Barrie can tell Gilmour that "all the pleasure in writing for the paper has gone." He was still hoping that Greenwood would come back to edit either a new or some existing publication, but meanwhile there was no falling-off in work. The *British Weekly*, the *Scotsman*, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* and now the *Scots Observer* were all getting their quota, and the articles on the professors were still piling up. He decided to add Lord Rosebery, and as he had already made up his mind to include Joseph Thomson, he found himself seeking a more accurate title for the anticipated book. All this time, too—though it seems hard to believe—the news of any journalistic development would set him

wondering whether he couldn't have a hand in it too. He was ready to review books, criticise plays, or write serious articles, at any moment and on top of everything else, if only an opening turned up. Perhaps he did. The bibliographers just pant after him at this period, and there is no knowing where he was or wasn't at work.

A landmark at the beginning of October, though. Hodder and Stoughton published *When A Man's Single*—dedicated to W. Robertson Nicoll—and there was a good subscription, as they call it, from the trade. That is the barometer which seldom makes a mistake, and registers entirely on hard-won experience. Reviewers could hardly fail to detect what a hotchpotch it was, but they were kind on the whole and sometimes more than kind. The sales began to move. And *Auld Licht Idylls* was going into a second edition, and even *Better Dead*—though there was no talk of reprinting in this case—made a sudden reappearance on the bookstalls. More and more pervasively, as the autumn drew on, there was a consciousness among readers that there was an author called J. M. Barrie. He was Scotch. And he was a humorist. Where had he come from, and what else, if anything, had he written? Talk. That was what was doing it, with Nicoll and Henley to start it off again in their separate but almost equally influential worlds. And the author was still a long way from his ultimate interpretation of publicity. Again he had urged both friends and acquaintances to review him as quickly and prominently as they could. He sent a copy of the *Idylls* to Gladstone this month, and was delighted to secure an autograph acknowledgment. Must have kept it for years, too, until it came over him that nothing of this nature must be kept.

A visit from his brother—his more than proud brother now—at the end of October. A sitting to Maurice Greiffenhagen for a drawing in the *British Weekly*. Decision to add a new article on Stevenson to the Professors. There were now seven of them, and with Rosebery, Thomson, and Dr. Walter C. Smith—you remember him preaching at the Edinburgh Free High?—there was a total of eleven. For some reason, though he affected to be surprised afterwards, a passing cloud led to the omission of Dr. Whyte. But eleven, in any case, was a specially significant number. A cricket team, of course. The title was fixed. *An Edinburgh Eleven*, and Nicoll was going to issue it as the third of a series of "*British Weekly Extras*." In paper wrappers, at a shilling, for Christmas or the New Year. Under these auspices it was announced, and in due course

appeared, as by Gavin Ogilvy. But more and more readers were discovering who that meant.

And then yet another new and self-imposed task as well. With Henley as godfather, or with Henley's blessing as head of the table at a Victorian Mermaid Inn, Barrie and Marriott Watson were to set themselves to write a serious, four-act drama. Subject, Richard Savage—which it is difficult to imagine the smaller collaborator selecting by himself; unless, of course, one is to regard Savage as an Early British Satirist. No, surely there was much more Henley in this choice, with Watson—the expert on ruffles and knee-breeches—as secondary authority on the period. In any case they both got down to it; and talked and planned and argued whenever they met. It was a slow business, though; the story, it must be admitted, showed a marked tendency to slip between their hands; and in the end, which wasn't by any means yet, there would be precious little recognisable Barrie in it, not a great deal of easily identifiable Watson, and far too much of Henley-once-removed. Never mind. Writing dialogue, even though it were eighteenth-century dialogue, was always fascinating, and of course no one knows whether he can collaborate or not until he tries. Barrie couldn't, which should surprise nobody, though he did it once again, and often—when he liked an author and saw him struggling to become a playwright—had the notion in his mind. Meanwhile, *Richard Savage* must be envisaged as moving forward, sluggishly and with difficulty, for many more months. But indeed one of its authors was still anything but idle in other directions. He was always buying more paper and ink.

A social scene, for a change. An evening at the Holborn Restaurant—Friday, November 23rd, 1888—on the eve of the faithful Gilmour's marriage. Joseph Thomson and Paul du Chaillu are there, Marriott Watson and four or five others of the circle, most of them connected with the Press. Also—for this is no bachelor orgy—the bride's father, who will be knighted thirty years later after a lifetime of devoted service to his Royal Geographical Society. Sir John Scott Keltie, with many other British and foreign honours too. To-night, at the age of forty-eight, he isn't even the oldest member of the party, nor is he exactly preparing to bid farewell to his only child. For after their honeymoon the bride and bridegroom will be absorbed for many years into his household, where the bridegroom, who is now reading for the Bar, will presently enter on his

third simultaneous profession. So this is a happy, innocent evening, and to-morrow the party will attend an equally happy and innocent wedding. Gilmour's last night in Furnivals Inn. The other tenant wouldn't at all mind being married himself, and indeed, if his articles are to be taken as a form of wish-fulfilment, he has by this time been married again and again. He has helped and will go on helping himself generously to all his friends' experiences, but even when he writes a whole short series on his own honeymoon, the picture of his wife remains vague. He is still in and out of love with every pretty woman he sees, and if one of them were to take him seriously it would be the end of Furnivals Inn. But they don't, and somehow, except in his constant dreams, he doesn't really expect it. For women are practical creatures, and they like him, and he amuses them, but it isn't only his smallness that keeps them on their own side of the line. It is a very clear feeling, whenever he approaches it, that he is still watching himself much more carefully and closely than they can possibly approve. They know they have gone to his head, but it is them that he should be thinking of in this condition; and instinct, even in the 'eighties, tells them plainly that part of him is treating it all as a fascinating game. It isn't enough for them, and what they can't understand they always fear. They take the flattery, but their hearts remain untouched. Except, perhaps, by pity—the very last thing he wants.

Before the end of 1888 there is one more proof of industry to record. The editor of a now forgotten monthly magazine called *The Young Man* had asked for a serial story to run through his twelve numbers of the following year. He got it. It was entitled *The Superfluous Man*—or, according to some authorities, *A Superfluous Man*—and may still be mouldering in the British Museum, but if so it is no part of a biographer's duty to dig it out. It was a pot-boiler, on the twice-tried formula of the young hero seeking his fortune in London. This time, in an ingenious effort to distinguish it from its predecessors, Barrie made the hero an Irishman, and somehow, despite this handicap, brought him through the necessary number of adventures to happiness and success. That was the end of him. No publisher bid for the book rights, or if they did later on, then the author, if he still owned them, knew better than to let them go. The Superfluous Man disappeared almost without a trace, and may be mourned without a tear. He can't have brought in very

much money, for *The Young Man* was no wealthier than its name suggests. But the twelve parts can hardly have run to a total of less than thirty or forty thousand words, and somehow, again, this amount of labour must have been fitted in. With no secretary and no typewriter. Just by writing and writing, and in the brief intervals snatched from writing all the rest.

So into 1889, and the publication of *An Edinburgh Eleven*. Although this was issued so cheaply, once more there was plenty of attention from reviewers, and again most of it was friendly. The sales, with Nicoll and the *British Weekly* behind it, were good but not remarkable—as with all these early books the real success was still to come—and even with four volumes on the market there could be no escape from journalism as yet. But for what followed, in fact, *An Edinburgh Eleven* might well have run its little course and vanished as completely as *The Superfluous Man*, and afterwards, in the writer's opinion, this fate would have been no great loss. Was he being too harsh? Well, there is plenty of unmistakable Barrie in it, and where it is funny it can still easily be read. But where it is serious it is pretty heavy going, and that chapter or essay on Stevenson is something a good deal worse. Its mixture of blindness and condescension. Its sneer at the victim's ill-health. Why? Are literary Scotchman jealous of each other? It's baffling, because a little later Barrie was having a stand-up row with Henley on Stevenson's behalf, and if there were any feeling of jealousy it all melted and turned to glowing admiration soon enough. Margaret Ogilvy was jealous, or so he tells us, but was this her own idea? One gives it up. One would like not to mention it; only there is the chapter, still in print, and here is the only instance of a hero who wasn't a hero at once. This same year he reviewed *The Wrong Box*, and told a friend that he thought it "contemptibly poor." Three years later R.L.S. wrote to him from Vailima, and from that moment, at any rate, Barrie was at his feet. Light through the darkness? Perhaps. But it still doesn't explain why, through all the editions of *An Edinburgh Eleven*, the author must still let that original chapter stand.

Up in Kirriemuir again for the beginning of the new year, but never for a holiday, and then, on his return to London, a farewell to Furnivals Inn after all. It made its mark, and for a long while yet the articles would be constantly employing its background; but housekeeping had always been a bother to him, and he slipped back

with a good deal of relief into life in lodgings. Number 14, Old Quebec Street, near the Marble Arch, was the new address. No more Bloomsbury, but a distinctly less unfashionable quarter. The first cheque which Gilmour, returning from his honeymoon, is instructed to exchange is for well over a hundred pounds. These aren't the only signs. John Rac, yet another Scotch author and journalist—who was one of the gathering at the Holborn Restaurant—has put him up for the Savage Club, and Keltie and John Nicol (of the *Contemporary Review*) have seconded him. He is already familiar with this establishment as a guest, and has poked fun at it, under a transparent alias, in *When A Man's Single*; but even before he is elected, Greenwood, supported by no other than Lord Rosebery himself, has entered him in the candidates' book at the Garrick as well. A prospective member of two well-known London clubs now. Four years, almost exactly, since he arrived with his wooden box at St. Pancras. Work has done it; there is no question of that; but luck and the spell have done it, too. And the pace is increasing. Already he is busy with the proofs of his fifth book.

It is to be Thrums again. And like *Auld Licht Idylls* it is to be old articles made over, and then run together on the slenderest of threads. Again, also, he will be the old schoolmaster who observes, philosophises, and this time apparently carries pages of dialogue in his head. He never leaves the scene altogether, though—great care is now being taken over this—and gradually, with interruptions, irrelevancies, and frequent wanderings from the track, a story develops from all the little stories and an astonishing unity is achieved. It may have astonished the author, and, indeed, if you make a book in this manner, with quite such indifference to established custom, it may well seem a good deal more than you deserve. It wasn't only, though, that the articles themselves were much more skilful than in the earlier volume, that practice had brought an enormous advance in verbal economy, and that he was at least enough of a technician now to keep his chapters at approximately the same length. His principal characters took charge of him this time, as they grew they made him a novelist, not merely a writer of sketches, and towards the end he and they go sweeping along on the high tide of sentiment and tragedy—so much so, in fact, that Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton were convinced that the public would never stand it and besought him to alter the end.

He wouldn't, though, and he couldn't. The little box had opened

wider, and clearly visible among its contents was a thick layer of chokes, gulps, and lumps in the throat. The pen, to be quite frank about it, revelled in them. If it was heartless, this couldn't be helped. It sobbed proudly and happily, and so did its gifted owner, as they collaborated in the creation and destruction of the simple family in the House on the Brae. In a sense they were his own family—Kirriemuir, at any rate, had no doubt of it—with his father the furthest from a portrait, his mother sharing the part with the crippled Bell Lunan of the old days in the Tenements, and with his sister left almost exactly as she stood. There was a son, too, you may remember, in *A Window in Thrums*, who is a barber and a blackguard, and is called Jamie. That was an extraordinary name to give him, wasn't it? But talk of writing articles on coffins or twisting fingers in sockets, what are we to say when he drags up, with only trifling adjustments, the whole story of his little dead brother David, and uses even this to draw our tears?

It's a merciless book, and it was the kindest and most merciless of men who wrote it. He was an artist; that is the whole answer. When he wrote he had to follow his bent, and if it led a sensitive man to cruelty or the unroofing of his own home, he couldn't stop for the very adequate reason that he had to go on. His gift was so far stronger than his scruples that he may hardly have realised what he had done. His mind caught a glimpse, his pen leapt to its expansion, nothing could hold it back and it went right through to the end. He killed Leeby, who was Jane Ann, six years before her real death, simply, it would seem, because the artist in him saw true. He killed Hendry, who was his father, and Jess, who was his mother. He had a worse fate for Jamie. He sat back. He had expressed himself. He couldn't possibly do anything else.

So there were the forty-five thousand words of *A Window in Thrums*, with its strange imperfections on its head, its characteristic yet at the same time profoundly uncharacteristic advertisement of private sorrow, and with a quality sticking out of it which would entrance nine readers and madden the tenth. A novel in spite of itself. Truth distorted and turned back into deeper truth. Absolutely unlike anything else. Indefensible at one moment, flawless at the next. Reeking with sentiment, and then rocking wildly between humour and the macabre. Shamelessly sincere. Appallingly artificial. And falling together, in spite of everything, into one powerfully atmospheric whole. No, he didn't deserve it, except that

he had worked hard enough. It ought to have been a mess and a muddle, and it's just a miracle that it wasn't. We're driven back to the word which we have tried so hard not to cheapen by repetition, and the word which in the last ditch we must always, if we are trying to be honest, resent and suspect. If *A Window in Thrums* isn't a work of genius, then there aren't such things. But don't ask us to prove it; for it is the essence of genius that this can never be done.

The proof-reader, serialist, journalist, reviewer, and playwright was also labouring this spring on his second critical appreciation—*Thomas Hardy: The Historian of Wessex*—for the *Contemporary*. The two authors, though with all but twenty years between them, were friends already, linked by both Meredith and Henley; and friends they would always remain. The parallel with Meredith is close in the long struggle and many disappointments before Hardy, too, received the public honour but never the wide popular support that was his due. Close, also, in the hero-worship that Barrie gave to both, and in his steadfast determination to spread and consolidate their fame. But where Meredith was rampagous and florid, Hardy was quiet and shy. Meredith looked like a demigod and a poet; Hardy, at a first or even second glance, might still be a provincial architect and surveyor. But Barrie didn't only take more than two glances; he saw and insisted on seeing qualities which were hidden perhaps even from Hardy himself. Where he worshipped he would go on worshipping until, if necessary, such qualities created themselves, and meanwhile anything that a hero had done, was doing, or was going to do, must be right. He romanticised Hardy's origin and up-bringing far more than the simple subject could have dreamt of doing for himself. He probably even admired Max Gate, the house near Dorchester which Hardy had designed. He looked up, nothing could stop him looking up, though Hardy was the last man who either wanted or knew how to look down. Strange association, in a way, with always a kind of reluctance and uneasiness on the part of the hero, and with the worshipper once more shooting past him in popularity and worldly success. True and growing friendship in spite of this, and in spite of Barrie's increasingly proprietary attitude as the years went by. He gave, in this case if not in all of them, far more than he took; there was no kind of effort that he wouldn't willingly and ingeniously expend. Always as a disciple to a master, but never—



because he was Barrie throughout—with the faintest visible effect on his own work.

Always these two chief gods in the story now—at Flint Cottage, at Max Gate, or on their visits to London—to receive praise, to be told of his ideas, to be helped and encouraged, and turned whenever possible into boys again as well. Also, for neither was really superhuman, to look with envy on his soaring progress in the theatre, where each had ambitions but neither could ever achieve what he desired. Most exasperating for them. But they were richly fortunate for all that.

Meanwhile, this is still the spring or earliest summer of '89, and the record, while waiting for *A Window in Thrums*, is still of a spate of work for the newspapers and other periodicals, with the aggregate of all the little cheques as yet far exceeding the profit from the books. Walter Sichel, who was now editing a monthly called *Time*, had added himself to the list, and it was still apparently worth Barrie's while to accept the not very staggering payment of fourteen shillings a page. Sundays were still being spent up at Highgate, or sometimes with Meredith on Box Hill. Remittances were still regularly going north.

He was north himself in May, on a brief round of visits to Strath View, Motherwell, and Edinburgh. Back in London by the middle of the month. And then, about ten days later, *A Window in Thrums* appeared. Again with a good send-off from Nicoll, yet it was obvious almost immediately—and even though three years later it would be selling three times as well—that it was going to beat all the rest. Not that it was breaking any other records or seriously competing with the big names. It may, in fact, have earned the author as much as eighty pounds in its first year, which would be nearly twice his corresponding earnings from the *Idylls*. But it was alive, and moving, and being talked about, and full of promise for still more success next time. And J. M. Barrie, it seemed, wasn't only a humorist, but something deeper and considerably more powerful. There was no hurry in those days, when a book could go on building itself up for months or, as in this case, even years on end. Calm satisfaction, about six weeks later, in a short sentence from a letter to Gilmour. "My book doing well," he writes. It was; and all the earlier books were feeling it too.

That letter is from Kirriemuir, where he arrived in July again, after another three weeks in Edinburgh on the way. "Here I am in

Arcady," it begins; "an article a day, Savage, etc., at odd times, country walks, that is my life." And then, suddenly and typically: "I have a grand scheme. What do you say to our going away and being pirates? 'Once aboard the lugger' sounds like music."

It always did, though perhaps the newly-married Gilmour could hardly be expected to agree. More news is that he has been reviewing a book a day, probably for the *Scotsman* or *Dispatch*, and has read "a glorious bushranger story issued by Macmillan's, *Robbery Under Arms*." That he has been "unanimously elected" to the Savage Club—"to think of it, and I was once obscure." And that Harper's of New York have published an American edition of *When A Man's Single* and have sent him ten pounds.

Very kind of them. Under contemporary copyright laws they needn't have sent him anything, for two more years he was completely unprotected, and even after that there was plenty of a less pleasant kind of piracy in New York and elsewhere. Yet it cut both ways in the end. When the laws were amended, Harper's had no more title to the novel than any other firm, and it was Scribner's who stepped in with the first authorised edition—though it is true that a lot of cream had been skimmed by then—and remained his publishers for the United States until the end. Nevertheless, ten pounds wasn't only ten pounds. Here was a fresh advance and the entry to a new and vast, even if still utterly disorganised, market, while the position was no worse for J. M. Barrie than it had been for Charles Dickens and hundreds of others. It was success, on however unprofitable a basis. Before the year was out there were American editions—without, so far as can be gathered any payment at all—of his four other books, and *Thrums* was on the way to becoming almost as well known there as here. Income was lost, but perhaps it all helped in the long run, for he was a firm favourite with transatlantic readers—than whom none remained more faithful—by the time they were offered the first of his plays. One tries, at any rate, to see a silver lining in the dark cloud of the old American copyright position; and in Barrie's case it wasn't only silver before so very long.

His election to the Savage (from which he later resigned) and his mother's horror at such extravagance are amusingly treated in *Margaret Ogilvy*. Yet it was a red-letter day—June 27th, 1889—and a source of immense gratification as he stepped aside once more to note how he was getting on. Extravagant or not, he could afford it,

for his unsold work was becoming rarer and rarer, and by this summer, for instance, the *St. James's* was paying four guineas for each article in place of the original two. They didn't want to lose him, for they, too, could smell success in the air, and where Greenwood had sown, the new editor was at any rate enough of a business man to continue to reap.

Back to his uncle in Motherwell by the middle of July. Urgent request to Gilmour for half a pound of Craven Mixture, which they all smoked, but which was then only obtainable from one little shop—Carreras was the name—in Wardour Street. And a postscript. "Thomson says something about drawing money out of foreign banks. What is it and how do you do it?"

Gilmour no doubt explained. But this is the significance. At last, and for the first time, almost, since adopting his profession, Barrie was going to treat himself to a real holiday, and he and Joseph Thomson—back once more after his fifth African expedition—were to spend it on a walking tour abroad. So far as some of his journalistic commitments went, this involved a certain amount of extra work in advance: though of course once he got on the Continent he couldn't resist sending home further articles on what he found. For others it was necessary to appoint deputies to hold the fort against his return. But all this was scrupulously done, and on Monday, August 5th, the two travellers embarked at Leith—the smaller of them, now aged twenty-nine, thus leaving the shores of the United Kingdom for the first time.

They went up the Rhine on a steamer to Constance, they walked in the Austrian Tyrol, they crossed the Stelvio Pass into Italy, they stopped at Lake Como, they crossed the Splügen Pass to Lucerne, and so they found their way at last to Paris, where they spent five days seeing the sights and the contemporary Exhibition before returning to their native land. It was a great experience for at least one of them; but, alas, it wasn't a great success. For more than seven years Barrie had been dreaming of some such adventure, though preferably in a much darker continent than Europe, but the truth was that in the first place he actually took very little interest in scenery for its own sake, while in the second place he was incapable of enjoying any expedition which he couldn't lead. Just as well, in fact, that they didn't try Africa, for even those four weeks or so among tourist centres were enough to produce a mutual rattling of nerves. But though the innocent hero tottered on his

pedestal, he didn't fall. They parted without angry words, let alone anything like bloodshed, and at their next meeting the old relationship was at once resumed. Again Thomson had had a very odd experience. But he wouldn't be the last to discover that his strange companion must see everything (if he cared to look at it at all) through his own eyes, and would always seek to approach it in his own way.

Back, then, to Scotland by early September, and into a fresh welter of work. Last touches to *Richard Savage*. More scraps of dialogue for the play about the house-boat. Reviewing; still at the average rate of a book a day. The new, big novel moving forward fairly rapidly now, though not without hidden obstructions which would sometimes block its progress or send it back, more than once, to find another way round. Facility of thought and expression still struggling with uncertainty and inexperience as to how big novels were really written; but the inward something, as we all know now, still giving it life and strength. A hundred and eighty-one little numbered notes in the pocket-book of this period, of which perhaps four out of five are queries or reminders about details for *The Little Minister*, with the balance flickering round ideas for articles or more plays. Already, though, Dr. Donald Macleod, yet another minister himself and now editing the monthly magazine *Good Words* for Messrs. Isbister, hadn't only seen enough of the manuscript to undertake its serial publication when finished, but had asked for a shorter story, to run through two or three earlier numbers as well. By October Barrie was hard at work on this, too. It was called *A Tilly-loss Scandal*, and he always had a liking for it, though for some reason only the American pirates reprinted it in book form. It actually appeared in the January and February issues, while in the latter month there was another *Contemporary* essay; this time on the novels of Baring-Gould.

Yes, plenty of work that autumn in the little room at Strath View. This, in fact, was far his longest continuous time here since the period of pause before the leap to London; but London—though by his own choice he was fading out of the *St. James's Gazette*—hadn't forgotten him and was still reading him constantly in the *British Weekly*. Partly, no doubt, it was his mother's health that kept him so long by her side—see also *Margaret Ogilvy* again for how he read what he had written aloud to her, and how she was now watching for herself, whatever else she may have missed, in every instalment.

But there were other reasons. A task like this novel wouldn't only be much more difficult with all the London interruptions, but so much local scenery and local legend were now going into it that it was much better to be on the spot.

In November, perhaps for copyright purposes, or perhaps because typescripts were still exceedingly rare, he arranged with Marriott Watson for *Richard Savage*—completed at last—to be privately printed. No manager saw it yet, though. That was to wait until he was south again, when both of them could describe its merits in person.

Something else was happening in these autumn months of '89, as he worked and walked. Kirriemuir was making the remarkable discovery, little as some of the inhabitants could still understand it, that there was a celebrity in its midst. Visitors—in January the local paper actually gave a list of them—had been asking about him, what he looked like, and where he lived. Quite a number of them were already anxious—and they haven't abandoned this interest yet—to be shown the original Window. Well, there it was, in a sense, in that acute angle of his parents' home, with Mrs. David Barrie very likely sitting inside it and gazing out. It wasn't only, however, that Strath View failed to fit the rest of the description; being clearly—and as Mrs. David Barrie had rather indignantly told the author—a much larger residence than the House on the Brae. The other point was that neither the author nor at any rate his elder sister at all appreciated being peered at by passers-by. So Jane Ann put it about that the real window was in a small house on the other side of the road. It was a house in which, as a matter of fact, the author himself had never set foot. But even though it wasn't thatched, and had two storeys instead of one, and though the only window which looked in the right direction was quite obviously in an upstairs bedroom and couldn't possibly be in a kitchen, it was at any rate much more like a cottage and stood practically on the right spot.

So the sightseers gladly adopted it, and still go to see it—there is now a notice-board definitely establishing its undisputed claims—and the author was relieved and characteristically amused. For of course the House on the Brae was the synthetic product of memories and imagination, and his mother's window, though she had sat there often enough, had never, even in the Tenements, been a "square foot of glass." Yet, of course, one shouldn't blame the sight-seers, who for fifty years now have shown their affection for Barrie and

his book by toiling up the hill, and staring at a bedroom window that had nothing to do with either. This was and remains a tribute to its essential reality. He wasn't always, perhaps, as grateful as he might have been, for a powerful resistance to notoriety was now quite as strong as his determination to win and keep it. But there was a thrill that autumn when the Kirriemuir shops began offering photographs of the window, and "jewel-boxes" and other little souvenirs bearing its portrait and name. No, he wouldn't buy them himself, but he certainly hadn't overlooked them.

There was a sale-room mystery, many years afterwards, when it was discovered that two manuscripts of the 150,000-word *Little Minister* were in existence, but the simple solution is that both of them were genuine. The first went off to *Good Words* as soon as it was finished; the second was a revised version, undertaken at intervals during 1890 and the first half of '91, and it was this that was used for the book. There can be no doubt, either, that a lot of tinkering was necessary, though it would have had to be carried much further before all discrepancies of plot and period were removed. Technically, in fact—and perhaps it is better to face this now than to have it hanging over us any longer—this supreme effort at a big novel continually breaks down. The construction creaks, jams, or jerks its way along. Our old friend the dominie—but *is* he our old friend or not?—is again the narrator, but is incorrigible at forgetting it. Melodrama and the Auld Lichts again make the queerest kind of mixture. Page after page, at any rate to our modern eyes, seems to cry aloud for cutting. And when Robertson Nicoll described the whole work as "wildly improbable," he was never less guilty of exaggeration in his life. "But is it not a rich book," he adds, "with many pretty little things in it?" And this seems more like understatement. Here is another world that never existed, and a story—despite the immense pains which went to its making—that can hardly hold water for five minutes on end. But here also are strangeness, beauty, and romance. Here, and never more so, is the tremendous personal quality illuminating almost every line. And again, even if it was an accident, how enviable is the novelist who can go swinging into his big final scene, and with lasting impetus, when still only just over half-way through the book.

No, Babbie—that elfin but often far too tenuous heroine—certainly shouldn't have indulged in baby-talk. Gavin Dishart—we just know

—couldn't possibly have settled down with her, nor she with him. Character after character, if we pause for a moment to consider their speech or behaviour, must be thrown out of any novel as far too preposterous for belief. The time schedule is an insult to the intelligence, and, oh, what a muddled, nonsensical story in its bare bones!

Never mind. It's the richness, as Nicoll truly said, that counts. It's the effect not only of the ultimate whole, but of those constant, cunning, short-arm jabs to the heart, which can make us forgive everything, whatever the momentary effect on our reason, or patience, or taste. In almost all that it was planned to be *The Little Minister* fails again and again. But in weaving its own strange, dream-like atmosphere, or, as another way of saying this, in revealing the special quality of J. M. Barrie, it attains overwhelming success. What a book! And once more what an extraordinary author! Working away up there in Kirriemuir with as much cold-blooded care as if he were writing a dictionary; beaten from the very outset by his entire incapacity to stick to any of the rules which he tried so hard to learn; spurred on throughout by the desperate determination to be a real novelist; floundering in a torrent; scrambling to shore with that millstone of uncontrollable individuality round his neck. And finally presenting us with a queer, long-winded, patchwork production which gets right past our critical defences, as it answers to some deep nostalgia in our own mysterious and romantic souls. Again there can only be the one word for an author with a quality like that.

He was still with his family for Christmas, and had been with them nearly six months without a break before he came south again in February. Meanwhile, in January, he learnt of his election to the Garrick, though there is no sign in the candidates' book that he had followed Greenwood's injunction to do his own lobbying. Only two other signatures appear there—one is "H. B. Tree"—after those of his proposer and seconder, though Meredith had written to the Committee in his support. Elected, anyhow, and of course the long-suffering Gilmour had to change sixty-three pounds—there were more cheques upstairs, writes the new member, but it would be a trouble to fetch them—for the entrance fee and first year's subscription. He could also pay for another half-pound of tobacco and hold whatever was left over until next month. "There will be joy in the Garrick," this letter ends, "when I burst upon it like a sunbeam."

Here, at any rate, he remained a member until the end, at least

two of his plays found managers under its roof, and it was at the Garrick that he dined on the evening before his last illness. He used it more than the Savage, and quite a lot in these earlier days. Then, as he was elected to more and more clubs, he became less and less of a club-man. Abandoned any possible claims to being this kind of sunbeam, and developed that growing distaste for other sunbeams and their buttonholing ways. In the last twenty or thirty years, in fact, it became the rarest thing for him to enter any club at all, except for a private dinner or where a friend's candidature was at stake. They provided quite a number of articles, as almost goes without saying, but on the whole they were a disappointment. With the exception of billiards all the wrong games were played in them, and they never seemed the least like clubs in books. Yet he kept his name on most of them, and not only because this was less trouble than taking it off; for still, so long as he could contemplate them from a distance, they stood for fulfilment of a young man's dreams.

Back, then, to new London lodgings, at 15, Old Cavendish Street—which had not yet been overwhelmed by the big Oxford Street drapers—and with a new character in the cast. Thomas Wemyss Reid; later, like so many of them, to be knighted. Born in 1842, died in 1905. Journalist, editor, biographer, and manager of the publishing house of Messrs. Cassell and Company. A tremendous Liberal, friend of Gladstone, and then still closer friend to Lord Rosebery. In January of this year—1890—he founded and began editing the *Speaker*, and of course any literary man who at this time had any connection with Rosebery must have heard, either through him or Gilmour, of Barrie. No reason, if it comes to that, why he shouldn't have heard of him anyhow, but these were the personal links, and now Barrie must write for the new Liberal weekly, too. By all means. He would write for anyone who asked him, for he was still on the rank, as it were, and waiting to be hired. The fact that he was already associated with Henley and his nest of young Tories made no difference whatever; and in any case he wasn't going to write about politics—except, if the editor didn't stop him, with his tongue in his cheek.

In March, therefore, he joined the new-born *Speaker*—his first contribution being a sketch or story called *The Little Nursery Governess*, which was incorporated twelve years afterwards in *The Little White Bird*—and from now on was a frequent attendant at



its weekly meetings, where he may have listened but hardly ever spoke. Wemyss Reid, who was an important member of the Reform Club committee, did a good deal of regular entertaining there, and it was either here or in his office that Barrie met three more significant friends. Augustine Birrell, who was ten years older; H. W. Massingham, who was the same age to within a month; and A. T. Quiller-Couch—yet another knight now—the youngest of the lot. Birrell was at this time Liberal member for West Fifehire, though probably better known for his *Obiter Dicta*. Massingham was already pledged to his long career of unshakable literary and journalistic principles. "Q," though he had already published *Dead Man's Rock* and two other novels, had still made little more than a name. Married within the last year, he was overworking now both as reader to Cassell's and as assistant editor of the *Speaker*, whose columns he did much to fill. There was strong and immediate sympathy here—perhaps the strongest of all—and though presently he and Barrie might meet but seldom, no cloud ever dimmed this friendship for forty-seven years.

Altogether a good haul for this spring of 1890. Lucky as well as clever little Scotchman. Yet strange as he was and couldn't help being, he not only understood about friendship in those bygone days, but found in them conditions where it flourished as it sometimes seems is no longer possible now. What have we done or what have we allowed to happen that has robbed us of the old kind of companionship and leisure? Were these questions that he, too, must ask himself, towards the end of it all, in the low, wide fireplace of the Adelphi flat?

But in the spring of 1890 everything still went merrily, and hardly ever now, save in the long hours of writing, was solitude his lot. Again he was a Londoner among Londoners, working and playing with equal satisfaction and success. And in April, as still further indication of the way things were going, Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton published his sixth book. *My Lady Nicotine*, though as usual there had been plenty of careful and skilful revision, consisted of old articles—not all, though most of them, connected with smoking—which he had gathered from the *St. James's*, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, and even from so far away in point of time as the *Nottingham Journal*; and again it is a sign of his increasing escape from anonymity that one of the main reasons why he put the collection together was to establish his title to the contents in the

face of pirates and rival claimants. To those readers who had now placed him as the interpreter of sentimental Scotland it possibly came as a disappointment as well as a surprise; for Pimms isn't the only schoolboy whose spirit plays round these rather typical late-Victorian pages of mockery and fun. Of course there were the flashes, and of course there is the unmistakable idiosyncrasy, again and again. But Jerome, for example, or half a dozen of the humorists of the period could, apart from this, have done as well or better, and where they did so, and are still read, will rouse exactly the same envious feelings towards the era in which they lived. That, at any rate, is almost certainly the chief way in which *My Lady Nicotine* must strike us now. As a picture of a forgotten kind of bachelor life, with peace and stability stretching out from it in all directions, with its simple and innocent pleasures, its evenings by firesides, its holidays on house-boats, its ninepenny cigars and its tobacco at nine shillings a pound. But in 1890, when even income-tax was down to sixpence again, all this was taken for granted and must be left completely out of criticism or appreciation at the time. Here, for that fortunate generation, was perhaps little more than another funny book at which they either laughed or didn't; and indeed, though it contained a lot of personal history and though its actual subject happened to be a fresh one, this was all that it pretended to be.

Some reviewers were reproachful, others and far more of them were glad to chuckle and praise. They called it "pawky" of course, because the author was Scotch and because some of his jokes were just a little too characteristic for them. But it was no failure, even if in sales and reputation there was this time no advance. The fact was, of course, that it really belonged to an earlier phase of his development, though there was no particular reason why they should either know this or make allowances for it. It reached a second edition in September, and then stuck there until *The Little Minister* gave all the books a fresh lease of life; after which, of course, the plays started coming along and the whole thing turned into a snowball. How much would he have made from it in 1890? Forty or fifty pounds, perhaps. Not more. But there was no shortage of cheques from other sources. There were several dozen of them, in fact, tucked away in pockets and odd corners, when at last, after five years of almost incredible patience and kindness, even Gilmour put his foot down and called a halt.

On May 16th, in other words, or just a week after his curious colleague's thirtieth birthday, he took him, more or less by the scruff of the neck, to the branch of Barclay's Bank in Pall Mall East, and stood firmly over him until he had opened an account of his own. It was a triumph, though it was long overdue. Moreover, if there had been a secret anfractuosity (as Dr. Johnson might say) lest once a banking account was opened, no more cheques would come in, then never had one of Messrs. Barclay's customers less cause for so fallacious a fear. No need, in dismissing it, even to look far into the future. Didn't he go straight off and turn the whole episode into yet another article which was printed and paid for by the end of the month?

Of course he did; and there it is, under the telling title *From St. Pancras to the Bank*, as the last chapter of *The Greenwood Hat*. For looking back on this desperate and daring action he saw in it the symbol of a dividing line. Before his introduction to Messrs. Barclay he had been an unknown and then an unnamed journalist, who had only emerged from his anonymity under an alias or in what was still his secondary profession as a writer of books. After it, by this rough but reasonably justifiable reckoning, he saw himself as a known author—who was shortly to become a known playwright—first; while the journalist, though he still chose to be nameless as often as not, had now just about passed the meridian of his astonishing output, and was on the point of fading, first slowly and then swiftly, into intentional eclipse. It isn't, of course, a real break in his story, nor a neat end to a chapter, for overlapping of all activities would still continue for at least a couple of years. Yet for all that it serves well enough as a moment at which we, too, can pause and look round, before following him, always a little breathlessly now, into the period of transition which was coming next.

This, then, is the situation and the summing-up. He's thirty. Still small, of course, still slight and pale, with the high, wide forehead, thick black hair, and startlingly fine eyes. His Scottish intonation is as strong and often as unintelligible as ever, his clothes are ill-fitting and untidy, his pockets bulge with letters and fragments of manuscript, not to mention a tobacco-pouch and one or more pipes. Yet there is assurance and something even like a touch of swagger in his manner and movements. He isn't afraid of anybody now, or if he is they'll never know it, though quite a number of people are a little afraid of him. Whenever he wants to, he can make them

laugh. Whenever he prefers to relapse into silence, he will do so, and they will have to put up with it because nothing will fetch him out. Subtly and mysteriously he never stops playing a part. In some, it is true, no one would recognise him, for there is no limit to the fantastic repertoire. But in the greatest of all, which is J. M. Barrie, every physical and mental characteristic now fits him like a glove. He uses them all, cold-bloodedly and deliberately, for even being himself, it seems, is part of an incessantly ingenious game.

He has quantities of friends, quantities of acquaintances, and is perpetually bewildering both. Sometimes by chance; oftener still by a kind of system which he has developed, and one that almost invariably works to his own advantage. There's no question of his shrewdness, and even his sensibility can be a powerful weapon, too. Yet the chinks in his armour seem manifest, and the widest of all—so wide that only he can allude to it, and only then when he is pretending to write of someone else—is a susceptibility to beauty in women which never ceases and never leaves him alone. He idealises it, is always seeking it and dreaming of it, like a love-sick boy. The thought of marriage haunts and at the same time repels him, fascinates him and frightens him; for he wants to love both passionately and purely, but how is he to do that when women, it seems, must always be pure when he wants to be passionate, or sometimes—which is worse still—passionate when he wants them to be pure? Fits of another kind of disgust come over him, and though he knows how easily he can charm them, he speaks of them cynically or writes as if there were something about him which makes them despise him at sight. But he can't keep it up. Again there is a pretty face, and he follows it daringly, boldly, madly. Is it changing him? Can he escape still? Does he want to escape? He's in love now; there's no doubt of it. He insists that he's in love. But then suddenly he sees, or it is made all too clear to him, that he can't play both leading parts, and in the shock of this renewed discovery he returns wretchedly to the only place where he feels safe. To his boyhood, which of course he has never really left. He knows it, yet who is bewildered this time? Well, as a matter of fact, both parties, we can be almost sure. But there it all is, and at thirty there is still no change.

But at thirty, on the other hand, and as an author, he can say this. That he came to London five years ago, with nothing but a discouraging letter from an editor to justify the risk. That during

those same five years he has never (though he might actually prefer to deny this) been short of money earned by his own pen. That the one reluctant editor has become a cohort almost clamouring for his work. That he has had six books published, that another one is nearly finished and has already been sold. That he has written so many articles, notes, reviews, and other contributions to so many daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals that he has entirely lost count of the total, though it can't possibly be estimated at this stage as less than well into four figures. That he has collaborated in a four-act drama (though no one has accepted it yet) and has practically finished a farce. That he has got to know everybody of the least importance whom he has had the slightest wish to know. That he is now, as he promised her twenty-three years ago and has never for a moment forgotten, the main and most generous source of his mother's support. That he has built solidly and on solid foundations, even though the bricks that he has used may seem to have been lighter than air. That he has made his little native town into one of the most talked-of places in the British Isles, not to mention the United States. That ideas are still coming to him so thick and fast that still he hardly has time to sort them into articles and more novels and plays.

That the fun of it all, despite every headache and every bout of nervous exhaustion, has been far greater than the anxiety and strain. That he is still himself, with all that this implies for a future that still stretches distantly and dazzlingly ahead. And that accordingly, though of course there couldn't conceivably be any other alternative, he is now going on again, as remorselessly and as amazingly as before.

## 13

Our approach to the nineties has been so closely preoccupied with one figure that it is almost with a shock that we realise how far we have come. For the nineties ended with the Boer War and the motor-car, both wedges, as we now see, driven into a fabric which would crack, crumble, and disintegrate whether we clung to it or not. Yet the nineties, far more than the first fourteen years of the fatal century that followed, glow with a warm and golden light in which there is nothing livid. No rumble of distant or approaching

thunder then. No need for the tom-tom or dervish dance to exorcise a threat from above or below. Science, as it is called, still a toy or useful slave. Tradition still far stronger than anything that could overthrow it. Hope and promise everywhere, even for the young and impatient. Complete conviction, whatever a few rebels might say, that the whole system—and quite honestly it isn't difficult to think of worse ones—was blessed by Heaven, was here for ever, or could only alter as it almost automatically improved. Augustan England, with dark shadows in it no doubt, but so plainly smiled on by every natural and economic law. Exquisite decade of bicycles and bustles in which Man, though never with less intention of doing anything of the sort, was slowly preparing his own doom.

Not yellow yet, nor sporting a green carnation, as it slipped out of the eighties. That was the middle phase, for Wilde and Beardsley were still to make themselves widely known. Wells was still unheard of. In 1890 people were talking of General Boulanger, of Tenniel's "Dropping the Pilot," of the Parnell Commission—there was a roll of thunder there, perhaps, but nothing new comes out of Ireland—and of The Influenza (as they still called it) and The Electric Light. Gladstone and Salisbury were the chief political protagonists, with Lord Randolph Churchill in what was taken to be a lighter rôle. Again there was a Budget surplus, and the Volunteers were still considered rather absurd.

Or let's look at the theatres, from which there is always to be extracted a special flavour of the age. Irving and Ellen Terry at the Lyceum. Mrs. Langtry at the St. James's. Nellie Farren and Fred Leslie in burlesque at the Gaiety. *The Gondoliers* running brilliantly at the Savoy. Toole at Toole's, Wyndham and Mary Moore at the Criterion, John Hare at the Garrick, Willie Edouin in *Our Flat* at the old Strand. Pinero still writing farces for Mrs. John Wood at the Court. Here was a feast, whatever G.B.S. was saying, and as we look back at it there seems less than no reason now—for at least Mrs. Langtry was staggeringly beautiful—to treat it as a period of decay.

Or take the authors again, for in another moment it is to one of them that we must return. This year Mr. Punch began a series of Prize Novels, or short parodies of the most popular writers; and here they are, in the order in which they came tumbling out of the bag. Jerome, Kipling, Meredith, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, "John Strange Winter," J. M. Barrie, R.L.S., Besant, Hall Caine, Rider

Haggard, Clark Russell, Jules Verne, Zola, Edna Lyall, Marie Corelli, Olive Schreiner, and R. D. Blackmore. Not much wrong with that little list from 1890, is there? And plenty of good names to follow it before the century came to an end. Conan Doyle, Stanley Weyman, Seton Merriman, Anthony Hope—of course one could go on licking one's lips like this almost indefinitely, and without once straying from deserved and popular success. But meanwhile of course you noticed that sixth name in Mr. Punch's catalogue, not to mention the company that it was now in, and it is with J. M. Barrie—leaving the faint echo of jingling hansoms to fade once more from our ears—that we must now, in this summer of 1890, make yet another journey north.

Cricket first, no doubt, but in July he did something rather special, and fulfilled a further plan. Last year he had only spoken of it, and then it had had to be postponed. But now he had rented a house in Glen Clova, fifteen miles from Kirriemuir, on the banks of the Esk, and was filling it with his family for a whole month. A summer holiday for them, with Jamie as host. This was something that they had never even dreamt of, and no doubt there was resistance to be overcome before he got his princely and extravagant way. But he got it, and here they all were; direct tenants of the Airlies, whom he hadn't met yet, but would. One sees some of them wondering a little how to pass the time, yet glorying in what had come to them, as Jamie fished, and walked, and of course wrote. He was refusing offers all the time now—he could have taken on a year's work, he says, since leaving London—but he was on the last lap of *The Little Minister* and nothing must stand in its way. Glen Clova is, of course, his Glen Quharity, and though the Esk wasn't in flood now, he was helping himself to all the rest of the background for the wild ending which he had planned. The month slipped by, and the first draft was practically finished by the time he was back in Strath View. It had taken it out of him, but still he hadn't considered the possibility of a pause. More articles at once now—there was a comic one in September in, of all places, the *Fortnightly Review*—with notes already for more novels, and stories, and plays.

In September, also, there was an invitation from Lord Rosebery to stay at Dalmeny and meet Mr. Gladstone, and if one sees Gilmour's hand here, one knows well enough that he couldn't have arranged it off his own bat. Not much anonymity about this. He was being taken up, as they say. Had to be off-hand about it,

mustn't let anyone know that it wasn't what he had always expected, and actually—see *The Greenwood Hat*—went through agonies of uneasiness with valets and the still more alarming female guests with whom he was supposed to make conversation at dinner. All too often, of course, he did nothing of the sort, though if they had only guessed it he was crediting them with qualities which a queen should have been proud to possess. He knew, soon enough if not yet, that so many of them were only spoilt little girls, but it was a fact which at the same time he found it quite impossible to face. They *had* to be what he wanted them to be. Heroines, and sometimes not very life-like heroines, in the fascinating but incredible story of his own life.

There was another and more unexpected meeting this summer with H. W. Lucy—no longer editing the *Daily News*, but still on the staff of *Punch*—who was staying with a member of Parliament a few miles away. Barrie went over there several times, and the Spirit of Oddity must surely have taken note. For the member of Parliament's butler was uncle to a remarkably pretty little actress called Mary Ansell; and though the visitor may not have met her yet, he was going to soon enough. From which moment it would become his very distinct intention to meet her again.

That will do at present, as comment on a queer kind of coincidence. Here is another of the little note-books, dated September 4th, 1890, with four hundred and forty-five entries to keep us busy enough as again we peer over his shoulder during the autumn and early winter at Strath View. A large number of them refer to revisions in *The Little Minister*, which *Good Words* would begin issuing in January of the new year. There is also a succession of notes headed "Illegitimate Child"—a new idea which was already haunting him, and in which one clearly sees the inception of the Painted Lady's daughter. For a time it seems to be developing towards another big, long story about Thrums; but the plot is still vague and tentative, and actually he will be trying to write a London novel, and not this projected work at all, when suddenly he is drawn back to Scotland instead. So "Haggart the Humorist," as it was going to have been called, is only another Might-have-been. Yet a parallel possibility—gradually making its way through countless little notes, of which some are even for a comic opera—is also beginning to take on something like shape. He writes down "The Sentimentalist (novel)." The notion sticks in his mind. The entries are



still only suggestions or suppositions, but the unnamed hero shows an appalling realisation of his own and his creator's extraordinary attitude towards women and love. Always watching oneself. Always standing aside to consider how every emotional experience would fit into a book. Swept off one's feet, yet longing for some impossible arrangement which would mean altering the whole natural purpose. Happy, miserable, romantic, cold-blooded, sensitive, and like some cruel enemy to every instinct of the human heart. Painful and more than painful little items, so neatly numbered and set down with such business-like detachment. Let's go on quickly to the end of the book.

Here—though by this time we are almost certainly dealing with 1891—there is a list of more than forty possible titles for the play about the house-boat, none of which was ultimately used. But it was finished, he was off on the second version of *The Little Minister*, and still it was a case now of refusing more work than he could accept, as he left Scotland again, early in this new year, and returned to Old Cavendish Street. After four years without a break he had dropped the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, though he was still sending paragraphs to the *Scotsman*. He had practically dropped the reviewing. He had dropped the *St. James's*. But he was still writing for Robertson Nicoll, for Henley and for Wemyss Reid, as well as for Greenwood again, who had now just started his unsuccessful *Anti-Jacobin*. Income still rising, too, despite the slight slackening in pace. He was getting higher prices, his earlier articles were being reprinted in other papers, and Messrs. Isbister were now paying for the serialisation of *The Little Minister* as well. The American pirates, on the other hand, were doing nothing of the kind. On the contrary, quite a number of them were rushing the monthly parts into their own periodicals as fast as they crossed the Atlantic; and it amused him afterwards—though less so at the time—that when the new copyright regulations were at last made effective, the more nervous or law-abiding editors brought the story to an abrupt conclusion in their own words.

In February, again, Clement Shorter, who had just been appointed its editor, secured the first of a number of articles for the *Illustrated London News*, which led the whole of that field in those days, and could afford to pay accordingly. In March there occurred the much-regretted death of John Nicol, assistant editor of both *Good Words* and the *Contemporary Review*, who had joined, two years ago, in

seconding Barrie for the Savage; and a memorial sonnet appeared with the fourth instalment of his serial. In March, also—so that Nicol, no doubt had arranged for its publication—the *Contemporary* printed the last of the critical appreciations, and on this occasion (which just shows how time was flying) on an author more than four years younger than himself. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in other words; though it is true that his first volume of verses had been issued at an age when Barrie, in his own case, was still an undergraduate. There was ungrudging admiration here, and it never ceased. "The last of our great ones," is the tribute in a letter, just after R.K.'s death, and perhaps another hero only just missed his niche. Or perhaps not, when one starts to think about it, for their roads lay more and more widely apart, and in the end one sees each little giant imprisoned in a world of his own.

Back to March, '91. Yes, what with one thing and another there must have been anything but an overdraft at Pall Mall East by now, and some of it was to go—as the loose cheques had once gone in the case of *Better Dead*—on a further speculation in futures. For the managers had had their chances with *Richard Savage* for well over a year, and none had taken them; yet both collaborators, not to mention their godfather Henley, still thought this attitude mistaken and that such blindness only existed to be overcome. So what did the rash but ambitious dramatists do? They put their hands in their own pockets—to the extent, by any possible computation, of at least a hundred and fifty pounds—and arranged for a special afternoon performance in a West End theatre, where the proof of the pudding might at last be made plain to all who could be induced to attend. It was thrilling, of course. Real rehearsals now, on real boards, with real actors and actresses. The unquestioned right to nod at a stage-doorkeeper, and plunge past him—for it was the Criterion which, in return for an option, they had borrowed from Charles Wyndham—into the bowels of the stuffy, richly-scented earth. Weeks of extraordinarily stimulating preparation, of hopes, fears, setbacks, and struggles to beat up an audience among theatrical potentates and their friends. Luckily Wyndham was reviving *The School for Scandal* in the regular evening bill, so that scenery and dresses could be borrowed too; for it was a heavy production, with four sets and eleven speaking parts, not to mention "Members of the Kit-Cat Club" and others. Savage was played by Mr. Bernard Gould, an Allahakbarrie who may now be more easily recognisable

as Sir Bernard Partridge. The rôle of Richard Steele was sustained by Cyril Maude—who would reappear, possibly in the same clothes, as Sir Benjamin Backbite a few hours later. The names of Louise Moodie, Helen Forsyth, and Phyllis Broughton should strike further sympathetic chords among playgoers of, alas, a certain age.

Thursday, April 16th. Doors open at 2.30. To commence at 3. "The whole of the Theatre," says the programme proudly, "lighted by Electricity." Moreover, in spite of a prophetic dream by the smaller author that there was no audience, the Theatre was also quite reasonably full. Henley had contributed a prologue in twenty-three rhymed couplets. There were no noticeable hitches. There was quite an audible amount of applause. At the end, in fact, when Barrie and Marriott Watson took a call together, there was something of a salvo—even if it were partly due to the striking contrast between their respective measurements and weights. Nevertheless—and though it is believed that Mrs. Langtry felt a powerful, passing impulse to appear in knee-breeches and the title-rôle herself—Wyndham seemed delighted to let his option lapse and no other manager even attempted to take it up. *The Times* of the following day speaks the epilogue. "Somewhat lacking," is its comment, "in the tone and spirit of the time." And even more heartlessly: "The spectator is enabled to witness the poet's magnanimous suicide, not only without a pang, but even with some measure of relief."

The day would come—but not yet, for A. B. Walkley was still associated with the *Star* and the *Speaker*—when what *The Times* would say in praise of Barrie could be prognosticated with reasonable accuracy as soon as the name of his next play was announced. In the present instance, however, the verdict was not only unanimous but, unfortunately, just. The inexperienced collaborators had produced nothing which anybody wanted to see again, and *Richard Savage* was dead as well as damned. Barrie, of course, made an article out of the disaster at once—you will find it in Chapter XXIII of *The Greenwood Hat*—and in due course some of the copies which he had had printed would pass, at fantastic prices, into the hands of collectors. Net result in 1891: a lot of fun, a lot of expense, the beginning of a stage novel (it was to have been called "The Third Sex" again) which he never finished, and a rebuff which might have kept him, or at any rate some authors, out of the theatre for good.

But he was theatre-struck, however much he might try to pin it

afterwards on the friends who urged him to go on. He had developed a passion, which never left him, for rehearsals. For the sheeted auditoriums and unfurnished stages where he could sit with a hat on his head and a pipe in his mouth, or prowl to and fro in the dim lighting, or put in a comment from some unexpected quarter, while a play was first turning from written into spoken words, and all the tawdriness was fresh and workmanlike, but even more mysterious than what an audience would see. He liked, though he took special pains never to use, the strange language and technical terms in this hidden world. He loved the power which he had here over beautiful and famous women. He could even, at rehearsals, forgive the other members of the cast for being men. He liked all the absurdities and what in any place but the theatre would have been the disillusionments of this ancient but immortal game, and was generous—but when wasn't he generous?—in revealing them to his friends. "Come to a rehearsal," wasn't only his way of rewarding anyone, from a child to a prime minister, whom he wished to please, but was the phrase with which any other playwright could always be sure of pleasing him too. And the earlier the better. Even a dress rehearsal where everything went wrong would, for his taste, leave far too little to the imagination. Though personally, of course, he would have enjoyed it much more than if everything had gone smoothly.

So at the Savage and the Garrick already, when actors talked—and they still do—there was more than a mild impulse to listen if not to join in. For he might think them a little contemptible or unmanly, and generally did, but at least this was as near to being at another rehearsal as could possibly be expected in a club. While at the Garrick, most particularly, he would sometimes find the one actor of all actors whom he could never even pretend to despise. Henry Irving, whose "dire orbs" had first frozen and scorched him in an Edinburgh pit, and whose Mathias he had been imitating, with little or no provocation, ever since. The greatest figure now on any stage. The acknowledged head of his profession; at the zenith of his fame and power.

And where Irving was in those days—especially when each was snatching a moment from his absorbing labours—sooner or later you would be pretty certain to find a wearer of the other mask. John Lawrence Toole; whom Barrie had watched even longer ago in the little Theatre Royal at Dumfries, and in whose farces he and his

school-fellows had made personal appearances. For this king and this kind-hearted clown were the closest of companions—though Toole was a king also, if it comes to that, in the land of low comedy. Each at this time had his own theatre; each was a manager as well as a star. And now, as they sat laughing together in the Garrick Club, there was a third, junior member whose works it is extremely unlikely that either of them had read, but of whom Irving, with his royal knowledge for names of any public note, had certainly heard. J. M. Barrie; who'd written that Scotch book that everyone was talking about. Of course. And to be addressed henceforth as "my boy." Oh, yes; they *must* have known each other by now—whatever Barrie remembered afterwards—and Irving had undoubtedly gathered something else. That this small member, who produced more laughter but never smiled himself, had ambitions to be a playwright too. This always roused his interest. One can hear him asking already if he had anything that might do for the Lyceum; for he helped to ruin himself—though he always, if possible, bought plays outright—by continual payments for vehicles which were then neither finished nor produced. But of course Barrie had nothing on that sort of scale—except *Savage*, the damned and rejected—which was even begun.

There was his comedy about the house-boat, and he may have mentioned it; and Irving may have looked at or mentioned Toole. The little author instantly decided to knock it into any shape that was wanted if this were a real chance. But meanwhile there was another flash in his mind. For it was Toole's custom to stage short burlesques of contemporary successes—in which he, of course, played the leading part—and Barrie, in this connection, had suddenly thought of Ibsen. *Hedda Gabler* was at this moment running at the Vaudeville, *Ghosts* had had its first, unlicensed performance at the Royalty in March, and *A Doll's House* was on the point of being revived at the Criterion. He dashed off a composite, one-act skit—it can't have taken him more than a day or two—sent it to Toole (to whom Ibsen meant little or nothing), and Irving's royal, machiavellian, but by this time, no doubt, also a little spell-bound insistence did the rest. Toole discovered that he had accepted it. There were some swift, hasty rehearsals, during which the author still never smiled, not even at his victim's transparent confusion and bewilderment, and at another matinée—Saturday, May 30th, to be precise—it was slipped in after a short farce. At Toole's Theatre,

as it was called, a little gas-lit playhouse in the angle between King William Street and Chandos Street;\* next door to Charing Cross Hospital, which has long since spread over its site.

We mustn't print all the programmes, but this is the first public performance of a play by Barrie alone; and though his name was omitted—quite possibly by his own wish—just as naturally there is no mention that he had copied out the various parts himself, it should certainly go on the record. Here you are, then:—

### IBSEN'S GHOST, or Toole Up To Date.

George Tesman (an Idiot)	Mr. Geo. Shelton
Thea Tesman (his Wife for the present)	
	Miss Irene Vanbrugh
Peter Terence (her Grand Papa)	Mr. J. L. Toole
Delia Terence (Peter's Doll)	Miss Eliza Johnstone

ScENE: Hedda's Shooting Gallery

Note: Peter uses Mr. Gosse's translation, and the other characters Mr. Archer's.

That's funny, you know. For the words "up to date" were the general formula then, when added to the original title, for perhaps nine out of ten burlesques. But here is the author twisting them to another, subtler, and more impudent purpose. And here—Oh, but of course the whole thing is funny, and so was the play itself. It's even funny now that Barrie only got three guineas for it; or was it three pounds? Toole of course was funny, made-up as Ibsen and still wondering what on earth it was all about. George Shelton, who thirteen and a half years later was to be the first and best-known Smee in *Peter Pan*, was gloriously funny. So were the ladies—for though Irene Vanbrugh (bless her!) should really hardly have left school yet, she had actually been playing *ingénue* leads in this company for nearly two years, knew all the tricks, and was a brilliant mimic; while Miss Eliza Johnstone was infallibly amusing in the broader and more matronly rôles.

So that on that Saturday afternoon the audience suddenly started

\* For no very good reason these streets have now been re-named William IV Street and Chandos Place.

laughing fit to burst, though whether at Toole, Barrie, or Ibsen they may well have had no very clear idea. To the delight, anyhow, of the first two characters, and even, apparently and on this occasion, of the *Times* critic, who called it a "clever little parody" on Monday morning, quite as though he had at least chuckled himself. For the next four weeks, accordingly, when the theatre was to close in any case, and despite several changes in the rest of the programme, it remained steadily in the bill. Highbrows and lowbrows came to laugh at it, and knew who had written it now, for there was no more secrecy when it turned into a success. A happy company—but it always was—a happy comedian, and, in this June of 1891, a happy playwright, too. Long afterwards, as was becoming in one who had also risen to such heights, he would be found treating his great Scandinavian colleague and predecessor with more suitable respect. "The mightiest craftsman that ever wrote," was his tribute, and there can be no doubt that it was completely sincere. Nevertheless, this wasn't only the pot calling the kettle white, but chalk praising cheese, and well we know it. Better, surely, for G.B.S. to retain his old mantle as Ibsen's prophet, and that Barrie should still be thought of as the first to discover how funny he could be made.

As for the three-act comedy, whose forty titles had so far been boiled down to "The Houseboat," Toole was now more than ever its obvious mark. Nothing was settled yet, and there must still be many delays and much revision before it was. But it was no disadvantage that for four weeks an actor-manager had put on a wig and a pair of whiskers and heard audiences roaring and splitting their sides at the same little author's lines. One can imagine, of course, that he would assume most of the credit, and in doing so—for he was a very expert side-splitter indeed—he wouldn't necessarily have been entirely wrong. But it was a promising situation, with no question at all. Especially as there were more laughs in Toole's dressing-room whenever—which was often enough in that flattering and exciting month—the little author dropped in or stepped round from the front.

There was more cricket this summer, still at Shere, and still with a literary eleven. Better-known names in it, as contributors to both the *Speaker* and the *National Observer* (as it had now become) were roped in. Little if any improvement in general ability or skill, though this, of course, was still the main point of it all. Yet one new player proved a striking if not almost embarrassing exception to the

rule. Arthur Conan Doyle. A year older than the captain, and like him a graduate, though a medical graduate, from Edinburgh. If they had met there, it was as much as they had done. But Doyle, after eight years of private provincial practice, during which he had managed to put aside more and more time for writing, was now a professional and rising author, and quite often a Londoner too. Large and lovable. Made for the nineties, in which fresh plots, it seemed, could still be found by those who knew where to look for them, and honest, straightforward workmanship was still, in the majority of eminent cases, expected and given its due. Already he had published *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, not to mention *The White Company*, which he but never his readers so far preferred. For by Sherlock Holmes, however much he came to weary of the very name, he must always be known; and it was in this July that *A Scandal in Bohemia* started that hero's long and legendary connection with the *Strand Magazine*. What an age, we say again, and most certainly mean it. That blue cover, those Sydney Paget illustrations, that sixpence—or fourpence halfpenny if you knew the right shop—which was all that the whole production cost. Holmes in hansoms. Holmes in a frock-coat and top-hat. Holmes in his deer-stalker. Holmes, sweet Holmes. And how deeply satisfying, somehow, that his creator should be one of the gentlest, kindest, and most ingenuous characters that ever lived.

He was, though, and as he was also a considerable athlete, his appearance with the Allahakbarries made him almost equally formidable to them and their opponents. Or would have, perhaps, if they hadn't all liked him so much, or if cricket—and especially Allahakbarrie cricket—didn't include such hours for feasting, and smoking, and talk. Here was another friend always, though here, too, and particularly later on, there was the something that set wide intervals between actual meetings. Yet one remembers him at Stanway—where Barrie had those big, summer house-parties—in the year before his death, and how touching it was, somehow, to hear him addressing the host as "old chap." Yes, and how there was a kind of terror among the gathering that he would get on to spiritualism, from which Barrie, it was felt, must be protected at all costs. And how he did get on to it, and how no one need have worried, because what might have darkened that majestic brow in any other case was utterly harmless from so old a friend. But Stanway, of course, is a long, long way off still.



Further evidence, in this same July of '91, of increasing position in the world of readers and ink. With its first issue of this month the *British Weekly* presents a sixteen-page, illustrated supplement, entitled *J. M. Barrie, A Literary and Biographical Portrait*. This, naturally, and as it would be in the circumstances, is panegyrical throughout. Yet it is interesting for two reasons. It is the first of all these special tributes—which will soon be appearing so frequently in two hemispheres that it will be impossible as well as pointless to enumerate them. And it shows how, with all his masterful and practical methods, Robertson Nicoll could remain a very faithful friend. For by this time of course he knew that Wemyss Reid had secured the book rights in *The Little Minister* for Cassell's, even though no present member either of this firm or of Hodder and Stoughton can explain why the change took place. It is true that the latter still issued very little fiction, but this can hardly have been the only reason when they hadn't hesitated over *When A Man's Single*. So it looks, for one can only theorise, either as if Reid had made a considerably more tempting offer, or as if the author himself had decided on a move. He might have. For all his real gratitude to Nicoll, he may well, from what we know of him, have hankered for more freedom and independence. Or again he wouldn't have been the first or last author to feel, as success readjusted his standards, that his old publishers should have done even better with his earlier books. If he did, he was almost certainly mistaken, and so far as terms went they had already increased the scale of his royalties without being asked. It should be added, while on this perhaps rather professional topic, that when he returned to them they were as generous as they were unfailingly considerate and accommodating in every way; though he took a strange pride in never entering their office, and the two brothers who were running the business from 1927 had to be content with the most affectionate letters, much as they would have liked to meet their own author in the flesh. This was the twentieth-century Barrie, though; the one who sent them the script of *Peter Pan* in an untidy brown-paper parcel, without troubling to explain that it was for publication by even the briefest note. The Barrie of 1891 hadn't yet developed such exaggerated characteristics, for publishers were still quite as important to him as he was to them.

Whatever the reason, however, he had signed up with Cassell's—and would still be young enough, in due course, to complain of the

miserable nature of their advertising. And it was arranged, though the serial would still be running for another two months, that they should bring out *The Little Minister* at the end of October. Meanwhile, having now joined both the Authors' Club, as an original member, and the Society of Authors—two more almost superfluous signs of the way things were going—he once more set off for Edinburgh and Kirriemuir.

Not such a long visit this year, for he was back in Old Cavendish Street at least a fortnight before his novel appeared. It was a working holiday, of course, for that still goes without saying. But this summer there was also a very special and pleasurable item of domestic news. To his younger sister, Margaret or Maggie, he had always, though there were but three years between them, stood in so protective a relationship as almost to be a kind of uncle or second father as well. She had stayed with him in London, again and again, and though he always realised just how good he was to her—for this was something else to be seen quite clearly as he watched himself—the goodness had been as genuine as it was incessantly unselfish. She is Elspeth, of course, in the two *Tommy* books, though because of the way they are written even Elspeth is perhaps more flavoured with extrinsic or intrinsic romance. Neither of them were beauties, and Barrie was quite aware of that, too. But because he had established himself as her champion and virtually her guardian, and because he was so irresistible and overwhelming, she had become and would always remain very nearly as much a character whom he had invented and created as a woman with a separate existence of her own. She worshipped him, of course, though he let her be exigent enough at times. She was also convinced, in later life, that she had inspired far more than the colourless Elspeth, and even came to boast and believe that she had kept out of authorship so as to give him a fairer chance. A strange product of his lifelong kindness and her own devotion; though of course when there's a genius in the family, still stranger developments can occur.

Now, during this summer, with her brother's entire approval—if, indeed, he hadn't taken a considerable and cunning hand in the whole thing—she became engaged, at the age of twenty-eight, to a young Free Church clergyman. The Reverend James Winter. His elder brother, William, whom Barrie knew also, though as yet not so well, had been a Senior Wrangler and was now a professional coach; which isn't nearly as irrelevant as it sounds. But James, or

Jim, as they all called him, had qualities and qualifications of a very high order, too. A man, it seems, to draw deep admiration for his character and his goodness. To Margaret Ogilvy he was the ideal son-in-law, for she saw in him what her little David would have been. To Barrie, steeped at this moment in his story of another young clergyman, he was Gavin Dishart raised to still greater purity and perfection. Here also, as by this time should quite be expected, was a chance to try on all or even more than all the feelings of a happy bride.

There was to be no wedding, though, just yet. For one thing a long or longish engagement was still the accepted and decent custom; while for another, although the chief enthusiast was fully prepared to help as freely as he could afford, the bridegroom was still without a manse or ministry of his own. By November, however, this obstacle was overcome; he was appointed to the little town or village of Bower, in Caithness; and it was understood that by the following summer, when he should have settled in and have got everything ready, the marriage should take place. Meanwhile—though this is also looking slightly ahead—the new incumbent would find that his flock, though small, was widely scattered, and to help him to cover the long distances involved, his prospective brother-in-law would generously provide him with money to buy a horse.

Hold that in suspense, please, for it is anything but detail for its own sake. At present the emphasis is on the engagement, and on Barrie's deep emotional response. For here was something that he could sentimentalise with all his insight, all his imagination, all his affection, and for once with considerable reason as well. So that although his mother—seventy-two this September—still had her real and her fancied ups and downs, and anxiety for her was always ready to clutch at his heart, this was the best and brightest summer that he had known for years. Work going well. Cheques coming in. Proofs of *The Little Minister* in its final form providing almost nothing but enjoyment. Anticipation both here, for its serial success was well beyond doubt, and in the no less important matter of the play. For in September, also, he paid a flying visit to Newcastle, where Toole and his company were on tour, read them the amended version, and knew that its acceptance was as good as assured. Nothing was signed yet, and it wouldn't do to boast, but terms had been mentioned and the fish was at least on the hook. Essential,

therefore, to keep closely in touch, and to be ready at any moment with gaff and landing-net in London.

No more lingering in the north, then, or walks and talks with the engaged couple. A dash to Edinburgh at the end of the month—where he picked up fifteen guineas from the *Scotsman* for his latest and now rapidly-diminishing share in “Grenville’s” notes. One more brief sight of Strath View. And then south again. Mr. J. M. Barrie has returned to his London circle and his London rooms. Mr. J. Toole, with Irving still prodding him on the other flank, has reached his decision now.

Garrick Club, W.C.

14th October, 1891.

I hereby dispose of all my rights in my three-act comedy “The Houseboat” (Or by whatever title the piece may be known) to Mr. J. L. Toole, the play to become his sole property when he shall have paid me the sum of Two Hundred Pounds in the following instalments:—Fifty pounds now: Fifty pounds on the first night of representation, Fifty pounds on the fiftieth night, and Fifty pounds on the hundredth night.

And I beg to acknowledge receipt of the first instalment of Fifty Pounds.

(signed) J. M. Barrie

15, Old Cavendish Street,  
Cavendish Square, W.

There you are. It was as simple as all that. You took the night train from Dumfries to St. Pancras, you never stopped working, you got to know everybody of pertinent importance, you were elected to the principal theatrical club, you wrote a play, and as a leading actor-manager was now in your orbit, he bought it. Not often now would it be much more difficult, and presently there would be an impresario who wouldn’t make agreements like this one, nor, indeed, written agreements at all. The spell would bind him so closely that he would take whatever was offered, mount and cast it with lavish expenditure both in London and New York, and punctually pay the highest rate of royalty—all on the strength of his infatuation for the author and his own untarnishable good name.

The beginning of this enviable and unequalled era lay only a few years ahead, and in the interval yet another friendship would play

its extremely important part. It was through Arthur Addison Bright—in the background already, and an agent (among other things) with at least a spark of genius himself—that Charles Frohman, third of this physically diminutive trio, would come on the scene; after which there would be no more escape from the shower of gold.

At this moment, however, it should need no business expert to see how Toole's agreement might still mean no more than fifty pounds and a flash of hope. There was not only no date for production, not only several nice points for lawyers if it were produced and should fail to run, but a clear opportunity to stop anybody else producing it from now until the crack of doom. A very large opening, still, for chance and luck. Yet in other words, and in the year in question, it was a perfectly normal and straightforward arrangement between a well-known actor-manager and a practically unknown playwright. Hardly anyone paid royalties in those days—it was part of Barrie's heaven-sent timing that he and the new system should go forward together—and it was Toole, thirty years older than the signatory in this instance and with forty years on the stage, who was assuming the entire financial risk. We needn't call him open-handed, and in matters of pure business this was never a charge that could be brought. But no other comedian had his position at this moment, while Barrie, in the theatre, had no real position at all.

So that was how it stood; another hundred and fifty pounds for all the rights, if a better proposition didn't come along meanwhile. It sounds cheap for a Barrie play, and as a matter of fact it was one of the best bargains that Toole ever made. Well done, then, Henry Irving. Your own luck will be turning all too soon now, and there will be tragedy for you both on and off the stage. Toole, too, and even sooner, will lose his health, his public, and his throne; everything but his fortune. But J. M. Barrie's star is still firmly in the ascendant, even though it is but a glimmer now compared with what it will be; and of course there wasn't the slightest need to bother about that agreement, for the play was put on four months later, and with such immediate and roaring success that he received the rest of the money within less than a week.

In the meantime, back to *The Little Minister* again. Cassell's published it on October 28th, and in accordance with a custom which was now practically on its last legs, in three volumes at a guinea and a half. This price was of course hardly intended for the booksellers, though they would sell you a set if you liked, but for the

libraries, who actually paid considerably less. The guinea and a half, therefore, isn't only historical, but by this time rather misleading; for by this time it was also the custom to bring out a cheaper edition—unless the book had fallen as flat as a pancake—almost at once. It was, in fact, a period of transition in the novel-market, but if your book didn't fall flat and you were getting a percentage on the published prices, you certainly scored.

And the world, it seemed—for all our earlier disparagement—was just waiting for *The Little Minister* in the autumn of '91. Reviewers blessed and exalted it, readers fell on it, libraries re-ordered it, and booksellers cried out for it. In those happy days, as has been said, the life of a successful novel was much longer and far less feverish. The vast figures of what would presently be called best-sellers hadn't yet been puffed into existence, and a large proportion even of the educated public still never dreamt of reading a novel at all. Yet if we look at *The Little Minister's* sales for the first fourteen months—at the end of which they were still almost as active as ever—there's something pretty solid in the record. Well over a thousand in the three-volume edition, nearly ten thousand at seven shillings and sixpence, over six thousand at six shillings, and the best part of seven thousand sent out to what were still called the Colonies. That's getting on for twenty-four thousand altogether. If not prodigious, then profitable without the slightest doubt. Moreover, the Hodder and Stoughton books were sharing in it, too. *Auld Licht Idylls* jumped up more than a thousand. *A Window in Thrums*, always and rightly ahead of it, doubled its growing sales during 1892. No wonder we are nearing the end of the journalism, and that long, tremendous, and exhausting spurt.

Yet as the chorus of praise continued to swell, and as new editions still poured from the press, there was a new character now, and another kind of heroine, with whom the author was becoming far more concerned.

Miss Mary Ansell, the remarkably pretty little actress who was mentioned once before. Small, quick-witted, determined and ambitious, and so often with a slightly defiant expression—admittedly there were some who called it hard—which might be unconscious or might be reflecting some challenge to life. But remarkably pretty. There could never be any question of that.

A year or so younger than Barrie. Her father, who had been a licensed victualler in Bayswater, was dead; her mother, who had

sons as well, had no very great personal sympathy with her, though she was proud, and with good reason, of her looks. There seems to have been a moderate amount of money in the background, but no hint of a family life with deep or settled roots. At one time or another Mrs. Ansell was certainly keeping seaside lodgings on the south coast—for Barric stayed there, and was ill, and the pretty daughter helped to look after him—but there doesn't seem to have been much permanence even about this. One quite sees how the pretty daughter thought of the stage. For in those days if a girl felt cramped or wanted independence and her own career, it offered her almost the only chance and choice.

But though her mind was made up, and her mother had no particular objection, it was still necessary, and not so very simple, to turn the plan into an accomplished fact. However pretty you are, you can't become an actress unless somebody lets you act. She did something which not only shows a good deal of tenacity but is almost bound to remind us of the method employed to publish *Better Dead*. That is to say, she put money into a touring company so that she could play in it herself; so that managers, whether they came to see her or not, could at least no longer treat her as an amateur. As a financial investment this proved no better than might possibly be expected; but as a move in a campaign it met with at any rate qualified success. Her looks, her cleverness, and her suitability for certain parts did lead to further appearances, though still mostly in the provinces. And then, in the late autumn of 1891, they—unless, by any chance, it was also Barrie already—gained her another step forward. Charles Wyndham was staging a revival at the Criterion of *Brighton*—a well-known farce by the American playwright Bronson Howard, which had been Anglicised from the original *Saratoga*—and Miss Mary Ansell was engaged for it. The run was hardly expected or even intended to be a long one; but it was in London, and with Wyndham, and of course it might again lead to something else.

Again it was through Addison Bright that Barrie came to know her, and by this time fairly well. He knew of her ambitions, and of course she was aware of his. No doubt, either, that with his incessant susceptibility, he was at least slightly, though more than willingly, in the toils. Her prettiness had of course and as ever been the first attraction; but then there was that challenging look, to which he was bound to react; and her quickness and intelligence—

not always, naturally, on the same lines as his own, but more than enough to keep him interested and alert. He admired her pluck and self-reliance. He liked her spirits, and her dexterity in so many clever little ways. He didn't much care about her mother, but then that is never absolutely essential, and in this case there was no very great reason even to pretend that he did.

She liked him, too. He could see that well enough. She could criticise him, and sometimes she could tease him, but there were understanding and appreciation and encouragement as well. And something else? Or if so, did he really want it? Yes; desperately at times, as something seemed to flare up inside him, or a pang of jealousy stabbed him like a knife. Less positively when, again examining himself through his private microscope, he saw where it all might lead. He wanted to love her, and he didn't want other men to love her, but he also wanted to keep the whole thing exactly like this for ever. Not from intentional selfishness, still less from intentional cruelty, but just because there were two of him, and the one who observed must always suspect or even try to expose the one who felt. Either he wanted to take and not give, or else to give and not take. Never, it seemed, to do both at once. Yet, of course, no such situation can ever stand still.

They were constantly together, and in stage-land it was already assumed that they were as good as engaged. But they weren't, or if they were it was a kind of arrangement in which he still pursued and still withdrew. Something from which he couldn't escape, for always he must test his feelings just once more, and then they had trapped him again. Other observers thought it all much more straightforward, but the actual complexity was almost beyond belief.

He did everything to please her—so much so that again the other observers thought it was she who was top dog—but always it had to be in his own uncompromising way. Sometimes he must turn into a stranger, or a very old man; then they must both be children, or he must be a child and she must still be grown-up. In one mood he would try to treat her as though she were a slave; in another he seemed so helpless that it was she who must look after him and protect him. What did she think was happening. Was ever woman in this humour wooed?

Yet all the time they were both simple and they were both innocent. For this was the early nineties, when—even in the wicked world of the theatre—there was still so much more modesty and



so much more reserve. Or so much more suppression, as no doubt it would be called now; though the code seemed workable and natural enough at the time. And love-affairs, like everything else in the period, were expected to be more leisurely, even by those who were in love.

So perhaps this should be remembered, and perhaps, again, the pretty little Miss Ansell was content to be amused and admired. After all, she wasn't waiting in a contemporary drawing-room for young gentlemen to pay their addresses and eventually speak to her papa. She was independent, and was still thinking of her own career. As also, it would seem, was Barrie, for so far from trying to cut it short, he was now doing his utmost to get her into his forthcoming play. *Brighton* had opened on the first of December. By January—for the luck still held—Toole, who had let his own theatre since the summer, had definitely decided to make "The Houseboat" his next production. His old company, including the three other players in *Ibsen's Ghost*, were reassembling for rehearsals, and of the two *ingénue* parts Miss Irene Vanbrugh would obviously be cast for the one with more sympathy and charm. It was taken for granted. For the other part, though equally important, was to be a girl graduate, who in this kind of play was naturally a slight figure of fun.

To everyone's astonishment, the author put his foot down. This was his first real play, and of course he ought to have been at the mercy of a man like Toole. But he wasn't, it seemed, and nothing could make him budge. Protracted argument, varied with threats and entreaties, left him as stubborn as ever and completely unmoved. "Miss Ansell plays the part," he said, and went on saying it through thick and thin. Toole reluctantly gave way. Miss Vanbrugh found that it was all settled, and so did the other *ingénue* who was now left without a part at all. It would take more, apparently, than an actor-manager and his leading lady to resist such unconquerable obstinacy, and, indeed, as the whole theatre discovered, it was a quality far stronger than their united professional experience. They were strange rehearsals, for the little author was always getting his own way. Or not quite always. Even he couldn't dissuade Toole from introducing old and well-tried bits of business, from adding to his own part, and from seizing some of the other characters' best lines. But Miss Ansell, whatever the rest of the company might make of her or feel about her, had been engaged; and at a higher

salary than Miss Vanbrugh's, though both together hardly came to twelve pounds a week.

She was also making her own dresses, and very fetching she looked in them. Not that the management would have dreamt of supplying or paying for them, anyhow. Nor for Miss Vanbrugh's, nor for Miss Johnstone's, nor—here is another old friend in the cast—for Miss Mary Brough's. We hope we're not making any present management's mouth water too much; but those days were palmy, stage standards were very different, and though Toole had a head for business, he knew how to be generous as well. Do present managements, for instance, slip an extra pound or two into the pay-envelopes, as he often did, from pure kind-heartedness? Or do they put up minor members of the company as their guests in hotels during the broken and more expensive weeks of a tour?

Something else rather interesting. There were to be two young men in the play, one for each *ingénue*, and C. M. Lowne had already been engaged. The other young man was to be a Scotch medical student, and there was some difficulty in discovering the right type. Miss Vanbrugh took a hand. There was a young actor—he was still barely twenty-one—who had been touring with the Kendals (and also with her sister Violet) in America, and had just been in a couple of small parts at the Court. She put a suggestion to him. He dashed to Old Cavendish Street, found the author in his rooms there, and asked to be allowed to rehearse. Permission granted, and not much doubt that Miss Vanbrugh had saved the situation. Another one-figure salary was joyfully accepted by Seymour Hicks.

So there they all were, in Toole's Theatre again, with a practicable house-boat by Joseph Harker—but Bernard Partridge had made a drawing for it first—and with the author smoking, marching to and fro, or dropping loose sheets of manuscript in the stalls. Not always alone there, for in practice he was neither too shy nor too nervous to bring in his friends. Several Allahakbarries and other supporters were seen at these rehearsals. They were all introduced to Miss Ansell, and confirmed the general verdict. That she was remarkably pretty, and that she and Barrie were undoubtedly on rather special terms. But no further information was supplied.

A sudden and distracting hitch. The play was to be produced towards the end of February, and already announcements had been made. But now a rival claimant to the title came forward—"The Houseboat," it seemed, had already been used—and at the last

moment, or very nearly, a fresh one must be found. Back to the forty alternatives. Toole didn't like any of them. Barrie suggested yet another. Toole hesitated, and began to laugh. There doesn't seem much question as to which of them then drafted the next communication to the Press. "Author and Manager," it stated—having first explained the difficulty which had arisen—"have been closeted for the last fortnight racking their brains for a new title, which should not only bring the smoke of steam launches across the foot-lights, but have a strong resemblance to the original title. As a result the title at last fixed upon is

*"Walker, London."*

Two impudent jokes in one. The first quite obvious. The second even more mysterious now than it was then. For the word "Walker" is still in the dictionary—"interjection (slang) expressing incredulity and suspicion of being hoaxed"—but when was it last used? Not during the present century, one would say; yet before that there was a time when it was the very crystallisation of Cockney humour. "Walker!" you said, to show that you could never be caught with chaff. It was the standard answer to the attempted leg-pull. It was also one of those blessed words with which any comedian could bring down the house.

But "Walker, London"? What did it mean? And what was Toole up to now? A title wasn't expected to be enigmatic then, but this one left its readers almost hopelessly in the dark. Walker, London? Yet it wasn't only perplexing. It stuck in the mind, somehow. It was pert; for a moment, with that comma in the middle, it had seemed almost clumsy; but at the next moment it had got you. Walker, London. The first of the Barrie titles to puzzle and halt the attention even before the curtain rose. It looks as if that rival claimant were another instrument of destiny, after all.

Toole's Theatre. Thursday, February 25th, 1892. This evening at 8.30—preceded by the still almost inevitable curtain-raiser—*Walker, London*, a New Comic Play in three acts, by J. M. Barrie. The orchestra playing again, as the first-night audience again picks up its programmes. The invisible author pale but determined—and determined also that on this occasion nothing shall induce him to appear. Toole, who of course wasn't in the first piece, making-up in his dressing-room; not in whiskers and frock-coat this time, but

in the full uniform of a low comedian—every exaggerated garment and touch of powder doing its duty—as Jasper Phipps, the barber who has left his Sarah waiting at the church, while he spends the honeymoon money in impersonating an African explorer.

Is that funny? Perhaps not, until you have seen Toole, which you won't do until the house has been well warmed by young Hicks and others. But they're laughing now, for with all the artlessness of the plot, and the soliloquies, and the reading aloud of long letters, there's a delicious freshness in the scene and setting, and there are lines that keep catching that audience right in the ribs. It's going well. It could hardly be going better. Let's leave it for a moment, and see—for a sense of period should be everything at this point—what the other London theatres are doing to-night.

Here, then, is what box-offices call "the opposition." Irving, Ellen Terry, William Terriss, and Johnston Forbes-Robertson in *King Henry VIII* at the Lyceum—with the new Edward German music. Dan Leno, Herbert Campbell, Little Tich, and Marie Lloyd in *Humpty Dumpty* at Drury Lane. George Alexander in *Lady Windermere's Fan*—which opened last Saturday—at the St. James's. Mr. and Mrs. Tree in *Hamlet* at the Haymarket. Wyndham at the Criterion, Hare at the Garrick, Charles Hawtrey at the Comedy, Lewis Waller at the old Globe, and Edward Terry at Terry's—each in the species of vehicle which his public expects. Melodrama at the Adelphi and the Princess's. Comic Opera at the Prince of Wales's (with Arthur Roberts) and the Savoy. Burlesque (*Cinder-ElLEN Up Too Late*) at the Gaiety. Willie Edouin in farce at the Strand. *A Pantomime Rehearsal* in a triple bill at the Court.

Ballet at the Empire and Alhambra. The big spectacle, *Venice*, at Olympia. The Moore and Burgess Minstrels at the St. James's Hall. Hansoms jingling, no doubt, in all directions. Horse-buses rumbling and rattling past the gas-lamps. White ties and black waistcoats—no dinner-jackets yet. Long skirts, small waists, hairpins—but no sign of lipstick. Coachmen, footmen, linkmen; soldiers in scarlet; bonnets and billycock hats. Laughter in some of these places of entertainment, but gasps and shudderings in others. Something more than a sprinkling of music-halls, each with as many as twenty turns, and pluralist performers dashing between them through the mud—for it is mild and moist to-night—and ever-present haze of fog. All this—but of course no films, and still less any dream of broadcasting—in what mid-week, late-Victorian London reasonably

regards as the centre of the universe at the only real moment in time.

And so back to Toole's Theatre in King William Street, where the third act of the new play is nearly over. The stage is moonlit, with lanterns on the house-boat, and a short while ago there was some ingenious business with shadows on its blinds, which the author may already be thinking of using again. Now, however, the two pairs of lovers are united, the impostor has been exposed, his Sarah has caught him at last, and the two of them are stealing away in a punt. Yet some of the characters, and among them the blue-stockings' mother and her schoolboy son (a keen cricketer, who has anticipated Captain James Hook of the *Jolly Roger* by exclaiming, "Caius and Balbus!") still believe that a distinguished explorer has been in their midst. They are distraught at his departure; but the mother suddenly remembers something.

"He gave me his telegraphic address yesterday," she says. And then: "Oh, I have lost it!" She calls to him. "Colonel—what did you say is your address?"

*Jasper* (off-stage): "What's my what?"

*Mrs. Golightly*: "Your address?"

*Jasper* (still further away): "Walker, London."

*All*: "Walker, London!"

Curtain. Roars of laughter. Thunders of applause—more thunderous even than after the first two acts. Some of the company can't make it out. They have been convinced, as they should be in any stage story, that the whole thing was far too light and flimsy for the public taste. Nevertheless, the public is now shouting at the top of its voice for the author. So Toole steps forward—a grotesque figure who is, of course, about as much like an explorer as Dan Leno or Little Tich—and responds with a speech in which he explains, as henceforth will be explained on every such occasion, that the author is not in the house. Presently the audience stops clapping and thumping—the critics have already dashed off to their desks—and the lights are extinguished and everyone goes home.

There is no question that it is a success, though, and the Press will be saying so in a very few hours. It ran, in fact—though the smallness of the theatre and the cheapness of the company were both in its favour—right through the rest of 1892 and to the middle of July in the following year. It then went on tour—though a second company had been out with it already—and returned on Boxing Day for a final month. Two years, as near as makes no difference,

altogether. And at the end of this it was still being played in New Zealand, South Africa, India, America, and the British provinces. Toole must have made a pretty penny out of it. We know what Barrie made—though there is a legend that he received a special bonus bringing the grand total to three hundred pounds. Later, when *Peter Pan* was being given twice daily in London, he frequently drew considerably more, and from this one source, in a single week. But he wasn't complaining—though he had no intention of being caught like this again—and no more were the public. It didn't even seem to trouble them that the only point of resemblance between this new playwright and the author of *The Little Minister* lay in duplicate allusions to the difficulty of distinguishing baskets from women's hats. There was no outcry at the entire absence in *Walker, London*, of so much as a solitary gulp or lump in the throat. For they had taken both farce and romantic novel to their generous and important hearts. And as both readers and playgoers they were more interested in the remarkable J. M. Barrie than ever.

So, of course, was J. M. Barrie himself, and not yet did he find it necessary even to pretend to hide it. On the following Sunday he paid one of his regular visits to Meredith at Box Hill, and as Doyle and Q, who were to accompany him, saw him approaching the station, they observed that the pockets of his overcoat were bulging so that his slight figure seemed almost twice its natural size. They were filled with the Sunday newspapers—the whole lot of them—for which one reading wouldn't nearly suffice. Was there more comfort for Meredith when his exalted little visitor arrived? Perhaps. It's quite likely. For with that particular little visitor in that particular condition it would have been almost impossible not to share in some of his joy. And again, though Meredith also had written about a would-be gentleman, he never can have imagined himself as the author of a successful farce.

Anyone who wants to read it can still do so, for after Toole's death it was sold to Messrs. Samuel French, the great publishers of plays for amateurs; so that if it comes to that, anybody who cares to pay them their fee can even stage it for himself. At the same time we hope Messrs. French will forgive us if we add that they would be very much surprised if anybody did. For it dates. The whole technical convention, such as it is, has almost certainly faded from the theatre for good. Its period may seem more and more

enchanting and fragrant as the years go by, but farces which centre round a low comedian have vanished together with the class of low comedian that once gave them life. So *Walker, London* had its great day, and its long triumph, and more than served the purpose of binding its author to the stage. It earned a lot of laughter, if for once it was too well-timed to expect a second life. Yet Barrie, as we say, was the name now, wherever playgoers as well as readers met and talked. And for a while there was even the possibility that a second play might follow it before the end of the year.

For Irving was delighted with its success, as anyone would be who picks a winner that has never even been over the course. He commissioned a piece for the Lyceum, to be delivered as soon as possible, and though it is possible that half-a-dozen authors were already on the same task—and would hope, and get a hundred pounds, and then be turned away—it was something more than a compliment for an author so new to the stage. Indeed, if he hadn't been so new, he would probably have had a pile of comedies in a drawer already. In the odd and actual circumstances, however, the only thing was to set to work at once.

In March, therefore, he was searching for a subject, and glad to get away to Cornwall and smoke over it in company with Q. At Fowey, of course, or at Troy in the Thrumsian sense. Barrie was always happy there, and he was happy this time, though his host—who had been seriously ill last autumn and had had to give up his little house in Clareville Grove—was still rather an invalid. Yet they walked and talked, and had long, peaceful evenings together by the corner fireplace in Mrs. Couch's big studio. Yes, real friendship between these two, and just recently still more links with others. For after the first and worst of his breakdown, Q and his wife had returned to London as visitors, and had been lent a larger house with two studios. In Bedford Gardens, on Campden Hill. It belonged to Alfred Parsons, who shared it with Edwin Abbey, and this had not only introduced a district where Barrie will be found again more than once—with which, indeed, for it is on the outskirts of Kensington Gardens, there must always be special associations—but was also the prologue to Broadway. To Broadway in Worcestershire, that is to say; the almost incredibly beautiful village which had already become a colony of English, but still more of American, artists. Frank Millet was one of the first of them. Parsons and Abbey had soon followed. And Sargent. And Henry James, to

alarm them all by writing about it, though still until the coming of petrol it remained most blessedly remote. Last—but not really last, and certainly not least—the loveliest of all actresses, Miss Mary Anderson, married for two years now to Antonio (but they all called him Tony) de Navarro, and for this outstandingly happy reason no longer on the stage.

The Millets and the de Navarros ruled in friendly diarchy, and when their houses overflowed one might still find more guests at the Lygon Arms—not yet as sophisticated a show-place as it has since become. For everybody knew and loved both couples, and against their simple yet at the same time undoubtedly comfortable background there moved such a list of distinguished names that we are just not going to attempt to give any more. But Barrie—through Q and his circle, and through Wemyss Reid who in turn (just one more name) brings in William Black—was already on the edge of it, and would soon be in the thick of it. He never actually had a house there, and as he hated music and cared nothing about pictures, he could never, even spiritually, be one of the real or esoteric Broadway gang. But he knew them all, and many of them could still be among his closest friends. They were, what's more. And it won't be so very many years now before he is arriving to make them all do his bidding in the first of the Broadway cricket-matches.

From Fowey, towards the end of March, through London and off again to the north. In Edinburgh, back for the sixth time from Africa, Joseph Thomson was slowly recovering from an almost fatal operation—if, indeed, he ever recovered at all—and Barrie called on him; to cheer and amuse him—which of course was never, in such circumstances, beyond his powers—and to give him news of their joint friends and his own plans. He was on the point, he said, of beginning a new novel, with the scene set chiefly in London; but this wasn't exactly the case. Irving, at any rate, must still come first; so it isn't surprising that the latest note-book (which is dated this month and was probably in his pocket) sets off with a batch of ideas for a play. Seventeen of them, dealing apparently—which doesn't sound much like the Lyceum—with a married couple and what happens when they have a baby. It is to satirise Ibsen again, but much more seriously. No, it isn't. He's had another idea and changed his mind. The eighteenth entry is boldly headed "BKWM"



—an abbreviation (and one only wishes that a tenth part of them were as clear as this) for Bookworm—and here it is:

“First act in his London study—Sister in Scotland—he is in woe, can’t work, gets doctor, who at first thinks it is a malady—Then sees B is in love. Horror of B—B gasps ‘With whom?’ He has no idea, & doctor tho’ guesses it is A, won’t tell—alarm of B, change of life, &c., packs to go off to sister to fly from this woman, whoever she is (must be in London as he worked well in Scotland). He takes A with him, & exeunt, leaving doctor ‘wondering how it will end,’ & chuckling (curtain). Audience see A loves him & that it is she he loves.”

Do you recognise that? It will go through many alterations and developments, wandering and returning again and again, before even this first act falls into final shape. But the author is away this time. He clings to this central notion, through every effort on the part of his imagination to shake him off, and up hill or down dale now he is drawing nearer and nearer to *The Professor’s Love Story*. On go the entries—Heaven knows how many thoughts were too quick even for the note-book—and as usual one has to pick out the play from a quantity of queer fish in the net. Yet it is the play mostly, for at least a couple of hundred of the little numbered paragraphs. And by the time the word “novel” reappears, something had happened to alter all earlier conceptions and the whole state and condition of his mind.

Not just yet. There was plenty of happiness at Strath View that April, with preparations for his sister’s now rapidly approaching wedding; with glowing reports of the continued triumph of *Walker, London*; and with work on the new play going busily forward all the time. On the ninth of May he will be thirty-two; or so they say, though he doesn’t feel like it. For he still feels so much younger, and though no schoolboy would work like this, the exhilaration which he sometimes forgets to conceal is all that of a prize-winner who knows he can do it again. This is still, as it always will be when he’s on the crest of the wave, one of those last terms at Dumfries. Editors, publishers, and managers, though they don’t know it, are the other boys; but he is the one who has thought of their games and is making them play them. Naturally he pretends to be grown-up sometimes, as he did fifteen years ago. But he isn’t.

And he doesn't want to be. He still wants, and means, to reach the real heights as an author and playwright, but where would the fun be if he couldn't still look up to himself from below? He wants to be both Carlyle and the little boy who once gazed at him. It isn't the least extraordinary that the little boy is writing a play for Henry Irving. The only extraordinary and unbearable thing would be to find—for this is still a nightmare—that suddenly he can only be a man.

Then comes the staggering blow.

Kirriemuir, May 9th

Dear Gilmour,

A telegram announces that Winter has been flung from his horse and killed.

Yrs

J. M. Barrie.

It was as sudden as that. And if the terseness of the letter seems terrifying, it was an appalling atmosphere from which it came. For this, at Strath View, was the end of everything. This was tragedy at its blackest and cruellest. The brother's immaculate friend and the sister's idealised lover cut off within three weeks of his marriage. It would be impious to detect even a ray of light. Little more than twenty years later young men would be dying in thousands, and their women would be facing a shadow that never lifted, night after night and day after day. Out of this, alas, would come the means of meeting it. But in 1892 they weren't expected to die, and when they did, the calamity was so utterly overwhelming that even stoicism would have been considered an affront. Draw down the blinds, speak in hushed voices, and walk past the darkened room on tip-toe. For God or Death, when they struck like this, could only be met with abject surrender.

So Maggie remained completely prostrated, her brother crept in and sat by her, and presently he began telling her all that he would do. In the first place the tragedy was entirely his fault, for it was he who had made it possible for the unfortunate bridegroom to be on a horse at all. In the second place, his guilt having been definitely established, he would expiate it by taking entire charge of her for the rest of his life, by never leaving her, by protecting her, and cherishing her, and always putting her first. While in the third place, little as this now could help, he would see to it that Jim

Winter's memory should be honoured above that of all others—or at least so far as he could honour it with such gifts as he possessed.

He was as good as his word. He addressed a letter to the congregation in Caithness, which was read from the pulpit during the funeral service, in which God is mentioned in every other line, and Maggie and her lover are both treated as saints. He also sent copies to the *British Weekly* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* (of which Marriott Watson was now literary editor), and both printed it at once. He stayed on at Strath View—working, it is true, whenever he got the chance, but otherwise never leaving his sister's side. Nearly six weeks of it. Devoted, consecrated, the kindest and worst possible companion. Never letting her forget for a moment, glorying in his sacrifice and in her continued inability to speak to anyone else. Privately—for the note-book would reveal this if one didn't suspect it already—his thoughts of God were those of an angry, mutinous child. There was no resignation, as in that wonderful but thoroughly embarrassing letter. A low, cruel, meaningless trick had been played. A stone had been put in the road on purpose. His sister had been victimised. All this was what his feelings told him, though still he could turn a superbly submissive phrase.

It had to be this way. He couldn't have taken it otherwise. His sister had to be imaginary as well as real, and he himself—for all he gave her—had to see that she played her part, too. They were everything to each other now, or if they weren't he was never going to admit it. He looked back to their childhood and decided—and also told her—that it was she who had been the one great influence in his life. Anticipations of Elspeth in the note-book. The novel is going to be all about a brother and sister now, and the sister is to be a paragon of simple virtue, while the brother, though obviously far less simple, will never, never desert her or let her down.

By the way, of course he couldn't ever possibly marry now. That side of his life was finished. Neither of them would ever marry. They would just live together, seeing nobody, cut off from the world and pledged to eternal grief. Perhaps, as a matter of fact, it might be a way out of an extraordinarily difficult problem. Or for a moment it might even be that his chivalry had found the most wonderful gesture of all. Down came the clouds again, as he tugged at them with both hands. He was dedicated to Maggie and her sorrow now, and both must be served, for ever and without a thought of self.

In this rôle, which contained so much genuine sincerity that we ought to apologise—but we just can't and won't—for suggesting that there was anything else, he decided, after the six weeks, that it was time for a change of scene. Perhaps his possessiveness was a little cramped in Strath View, where it was true that he was now virtually head of the family, but where other lives had still to be lived. From the shower of sympathy and offers of asylum he selected an exceedingly kind proposal by Robertson Nicoll. Two years ago—and it very much looks as if Barrie had had something to do with it—he had taken a cottage in Shere. Now this was for Barrie to make use of for as long as he chose. It was gratefully accepted. Brother and sister travelled south together—the sister still quite unable to do anything for herself—and settled into it somewhere towards the end of June. Nicoll remained at his new house in Hampstead. Barrie continued to guard his companion like Cerberus and to treat her as if she were the Queen. No complaints, no impatience, no act of homage and consideration ever left undone. But of course his mind was at work all the time, and the days would have been longer than ever at Anchor Cottage if he had kept away from his desk. Irving must still have his play. Charles Scribner of New York had just made an offer for the serial rights in the next novel, though not a paragraph was yet on paper. Other ideas were beginning to buzz once more, and mere force of habit made it impossible to stop the flow. Something, though it may not have been cheerfulness, was already breaking in again. Maggie sat waiting to be taken for the next scrupulously lonely and abbreviated walk. But there were days now when they couldn't start for an hour, or two hours, as her little brother wrote and wrote and wrote.

His friends still had to hover in the distance. He couldn't possibly think of London at present. But there was one whom he didn't know yet, and would never meet, who was so far away that most of the news that reached him was anything up to four or five months out of date. A letter suddenly arrived from him this summer, though it had been written as long ago as February. It was headed "Vailima, Samoa." It began "Dear Mr. Barrie," and ended—for a moment even sorrow and devotion were forgotten—"Robert Louis Stevenson."

A more than friendly letter. A little mannered at the outset—as it was almost bound to be—but warming soon enough, and hinting throughout that it was from an only slightly older brother of the

craft. As, indeed, in a sense was the case. R.L.S. was still only forty-two, though in less than three years from now the sword that hung over him must fall. But the bulk of his work had already appeared, his fame and legend had already grown, and though his final position was as uncertain then as it still remains—unlike most authors his stock has been highest, so far, during the decade after his death—he already had something more than a position and a name. If he had been considerably more condescending, there would have been plenty of justification early in '92.

But that note is so faint as hardly to be audible. It is as a fellow-author and a fellow-Scotsman that he has covered these sheets; and whatever his younger colleague and compatriot might have been feeling about him until now, it was a letter that swept everything else aside and went straight to his heart. Another hero came into his own that day. Another niche was prepared and would never stand empty again. From now onwards R.L.S. had passed beyond criticism, at any rate by others while his champion could defend him. And the champion had no intention of letting this correspondence close.

It didn't, what's more; for hardly had the first letter been answered, when a second and then a third arrived. And so it went on; writing to each other regularly and with increasing intimacy until the thread snapped and the sword fell. They told each other what they were doing, what they looked like, all about their families, and all about their plans. They sent each other presents, and exchanged copies of their books. Barrie paid a call on Stevenson's mother, who was a real heroine if you like, and arranged for her to meet his own. Always, persistently and pathetically, Stevenson kept urging him to come out to Samoa. Always he fought his own home-sickness, while Barrie—but of course he couldn't help this—must go on adding to its pangs. One wishes that more of the correspondence had survived, for each writer was always determined to do his best; but Barrie held back all but a fraction when Stevenson's letters were to be published, and his own have never been seen or heard of again.

Yet there was one gift from Samoa which didn't disappear. Some strips of decorated bark, a traditional product of the islanders, which eventually adorned both flats in the Adelphi, and then—because of the dust and smoke and their own fragility—were left behind when the second flat was dismantled after his death. Romantic, A•

romantic as anything in the whole deeply personal and memory-laden establishment. But they couldn't be moved again. Perhaps they are still there, and perhaps—for the last news of the second flat was that it had been turned into an office—clerks or their employers are looking up at them and wondering what they are. (Or perhaps they were swept away and the room was redecorated, so that there isn't even a mark on the walls. After all, that's much more probable. Only somehow there are some of us who would much rather not go back and find out.

All July at Shere, and all August. Still working, still hiding the world from his sister, and his sister from the world; still arranging each hour for her, writing her letters for her, keeping his promise in every conceivable way. But still only thirty-two, and with a profession that couldn't entirely subsist on brotherly love in a cottage. About once a week now he was going up to London for the day, on little bits of business or to appear like a ghost to his friends. Then back again to the post of duty, with mornings and evenings at his desk. No settled programme, though. Toying with a few articles, trying out scenes or ideas for the novel, experimenting with more than one new play. "To keep myself from thinking," he writes to a friend. But though there wasn't much to show for it all, of course he could never still the activity of his mind. He was seeing Meredith again—Box Hill was only about seven or eight miles away; and there was another meeting, nearer still, at the house of the Colonel Lewin whose step-daughter was engaged to Meredith's younger son. Auguries of more friendships and presently of more cricket; but this summer the Allahakbarries waited for their captain's orders in vain.

As for *The Professor's Love Story*, it was finished. Three acts of it, and by this time with a considerably elaborated plot. The Professor was still absent-minded, and still in love with his secretary without knowing it. But a lady of title was now also setting her cap at him. His sister had revealed an old love-affair of her own. And as the action moved to Scotland, the ingenious and once more curiously thrifty author had contrived to introduce almost the whole of that short story from *Auld Licht Idylls*; the only chapter in it, you may remember, which he had been unable to place elsewhere. It wasn't wasted now, though. It was linked up with the rest of the play as a kind of rustic, comic relief. All beautifully dove-tailed.

Accept the premises—and in the theatre, after all, there is no reason why you should decline to accept anything—and here was a charming, sentimental, three-act comedy; full of laughs, well sprinkled with gulps, original and unusual, technically far more proficient than its successful predecessor, and in Professor Goodwillie containing as long and fat and sympathetic a character part as any actor could desire.

Yet when all was said and done, Irving just didn't like it. Or he liked the first act, and then found that the rest was less and less what he wanted. He might have guessed, perhaps, that the author of *Walker, London* would be unlikely to provide him with one of his typical vehicles; but though there is no doubt that he could have played the part almost, as they say, on his head, and that one of his richest performances was just sitting up and waiting for him, for some reason he jibbed. It wasn't big enough for the Lyceum. It would break the tradition. He was afraid of it. And because he was just as peculiar and bewildering as the author, he wasn't even content with losing whatever he had promised to pay and turning it down. Somehow he seems to have suspected that his leg had been pulled, and that the author had deliberately tried to slip past his guard. If he hadn't actually been swindled, he began feeling that an assault had been made on his professional dignity; and though no one has ever heard Barrie say a word against Irving, from now on—as the courtiers at any rate would notice—there was to be a queer sort of coldness from the other side.

In any case, the play was back on Barrie's hands, while Irving turned to Shakespeare, and then—after thirteen years of tinkering and hesitation—to Lord Tennyson's *Becket*. The tradition was stronger than any gay and well-meaning attempt to change it. So *The Professor's Love Story* went to Toole, who refused it. To George Alexander, who also refused it. To John Hare, who complained that he couldn't read the author's handwriting, but refused it just the same. No doubt there were others, as the months went by, and until even the author seems to have given up hope. Yet all, in an odd and oddly-predestined manner, wasn't going to be lost.

Irving again. An extremely sound actor called E. S. Willard—now just under forty, with a long and crowded stage record, but still best known as the villainous "Spider" in *The Silver King*—was home on holiday from America, where he had been heading his

own company for the last two seasons. He was looking out for a play to take back with him, and it was the incalculable Irving who once more played Providence for the author of *Ibsen's Ghost*. Or it may have been that though both the author and his latest work had somehow managed to annoy him, he still liked to think of a good actor in an admirably suitable part. Willard, in any case, thought well enough of *The Professor's Love Story* to offer a small sum in cash—fifty pounds was Barrie's version—for the American rights, and the deal was closed. It may have seemed lucky to get anything at the moment. It may even have seemed like a windfall, to a Barrie who was still hardly thinking of this distant and unknown market at all. And the English rights were still available, if anyone cared to bid.

But they didn't. The script went back into a drawer again; and it was in New York—on the 19th of the following December, at the Star Theatre—that *The Professor's Love Story* was played (after, it was said, only six rehearsals) for the first time. With Willard as the Professor, and Miss Maxine Elliott as the heroine's defeated rival. The reception was cordial, though still the company got most of the praise, and the play passed into Willard's repertoire, where it remained, off and on, for more than another twenty years or the rest of his life. Yet Barrie, at the moment, had made an even worse bargain than the one with Toole. And would be annoyed, but could do nothing whatever about it. Thus the comedy written for Irving would vanish for a while, and with another actor, into the United States. But of course it will be heard of again, and meanwhile we are still following its industrious author into the early autumn of 1892.

*Walker, London* was still running merrily, and again he was in the wings sometimes—more than once, it is remembered, with Hardy—or in Toole's dressing-room. This means that he was seeing Miss Ansell again, but still resisting something as he saw her. Not yet, said the new pledge that he had taken. Never, perhaps. Or perhaps she could understand somehow, and with patience could be made to realise or even collaborate in the position that he was in. Why shouldn't it be permanent, after all? Surely if there were affection and sympathy, and if the facts were faced, it should be possible to find a way. He was balancing his emotions on a tight-rope, but it still looked as if he were going to be quite as good at this



as at throwing cards into a hat. And quite as exasperating to anyone who thought that he could ever make a slip.

He had left Shere in September, and now—though the newspapers had credited him, for some reason, with a visit to Norway—he and his sister were in lodgings at Number 14, Gloucester Walk; a turning (like Bedford Gardens) out of Church Street on Campden Hill. Maggie was still in a kind of reverential purdah, though she was taking a little more exercise, and occasionally—but only with tremendous precautions—was meeting a very few special and honoured friends. The friends were sometimes a little irritated also, for it was nearly six months since the tragedy, but with a guardian so fierce and uncompromising they had to accept whatever orders he gave. Sometimes again, but not often, they managed to prise him away from her—the Quiller-Couches even got him to Fowey for a week-end, where he unfolded enormously in the presence of their little son. But after anything like this, remorse would seize him. He was weakening. He was becoming neglectful. Up went the shutters against the outer world, for every moment that could be snatched from his work must be given to Maggie.

The novel was still a matter of notes and ideas, though he had found the title now and it never varied again from *Sentimental Tommy*. The hero had also definitely become an author, and there is a mass of self-revelation on page after page of the pocket-book. No more, though, than would eventually appear in print. He would pretend to be a little harder on Tommy than he could ever be on himself, but the more he built him up, the more he drew from the same source. "After S.T. thought these things," runs an entry, "& felt sentimental again, he takes notes & it is for his books." They are all in the third person like this, but every one of them is another bit of observation on Barrie. "His"—here's another one—"seems a struggle against nature, which is too strong for him. In love affairs and everything. Fatal capacity for assuming any sentiment." Astonishing and almost shocking confessions come thickly on each other's heels. Did he see what he was doing? Did he realise that no author, shy or otherwise, had ever taken such pains to give himself away?

Yet if this were to be one side of the ultimate book, of course there was the quality in it, too. The sentiment which isn't mocked. That piercing appeal to every reader's lost childhood. Like everything else, over a certain length, it wanders and hesitates, stumbles

and recovers itself, and in this case breaks off, with a last improvisation, rather than reaching a real goal. Indeed, what we are finally offered is far less a novel than a view of a battlefield—with distant waste-paper baskets still bearing off the scenes and pages that fell in the fray. But the author can still claim a victory as he sheathes his pen. For even though the best part of a hundred and forty thousand words have left him with what was to have been the main story still untold, he has planted his flag on territory which is now definitely his own. Henceforth if any other author is thinking of recalling the imaginative games of his boyhood, or of making his hero one who acts and applauds his own acting at the same time, he must first come to some sort of terms with Tommy and J.M.B. Since together if not inseparably they have entrenched themselves right across the road.

In the autumn of '92, however, the battle had still hardly begun, and it would actually be nearly three more years—with many an advance and retreat, and more than one complete cessation of hostilities—before Messrs. Scribner could issue the first chapters in their magazine. Meanwhile, here is another entry from this fattest and fullest of all the notebooks. "Becky Sharp," it is abruptly stated, "is the Napoleon of fiction."

Hullo. Becky Sharp? He's been reading *Vanity Fair*, has he? Quite right. He hasn't only been reading *Vanity Fair*, but it has given him another idea for a play. Only in one act; just a scene—a telescoped version of the last three chapters—which has suddenly caught his dramatist's attention; but something could be made of it, and the market for curtain-raisers was still going strong. The novel must wait its turn again. And then—for the other contest between plays and novels was still in the first round—a bigger idea and a much more promising proposition brought the theatre right to the fore.

The Savoy Theatre, to be precise. Richard D'Oyly Carte, who had made a fortune out of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, had built and opened it just ten years ago. The success of the triumvirate, as we all know, had grown with every production, more fortunes were made, and by the time that *The Gondoliers* was added to the list, the theatre and its repertoire were an institution famous all over the world. No falling off with *The Gondoliers*, either. It was rapturously received, and ran to crowded houses for eighteen months. Then, as is also common knowledge, there came the split.

Money was at the bottom of it, and Gilbert, who had begun with the intention of quarrelling only with Carte, discovered almost immediately that he was quarrelling with Sullivan as well. Not for the first time, and not for the last. But it was two years before the next truce, which even then only produced *Utopia, Limited*, and *The Grand Duke*, and meanwhile Carte—who had also become heavily involved with his Royal English Opera House—was left with an expensive theatre and company on his hands.

So he tried to revive their glories with new collaborations, but without conspicuous success. The great days, in fact, were already over—not that the earlier Gilbert and Sullivan operas aren't making fortunes still—but his heart as well as his money was in the business, and he never entirely lost hope. He had a remarkable wife, too, who took a full share in the management, and the run of *Walker, London* naturally put an idea into both their heads. Here, they thought—and he thought so, too—was the author of their next libretto; and still more so when it appeared that he had been planning a comic opera as well as everything else. Besides, Mrs. Carte was Scotch, and she and Barrie were in league together almost at once.

He described his plot, and must somehow have used a little more magic, for he was commissioned to get on with the dialogue and lyrics as fast as he could. It was to deal with a girls' school, with elopements, with the "new journalism"—you see how already he regarded himself as one of the old brigade—with undergraduates, lancers, comic mesmerism, and golf. The first act was to be on a kind of landing outside the dormitories—but of course the male characters and chorus would manage to turn up too—while the second was to represent a green on the neighbouring links. The music was to be written by Ernest Ford, who was a couple of years older, had several ballets and operettas to his credit, and had been conducting the orchestra at the above-mentioned Royal English Opera House—which is now, of course, the Palace Theatre.

At first Barrie seems to have been quite confident about it all; even about stepping, if one can imagine such bravado, into both of Gilbert's shoes. He had written, as we know, a certain amount of light verse—however heavy it may actually have been—and if there were new rules and conventions to be picked up, hadn't he always prided himself on turning them to his own, ingenious use? The Cartes, also, were full of hope. If there were any doubt, then look

at *Walker, London*. If there were still any doubt, then listen to Barrie. Not that he was bragging, but he had always got another amusing idea, and he was so funny himself, and so keen, and so obviously lucky.

There he was, then, bound to what was in the circumstances an almost impossible task, but determined to master it and to show his versatility in yet another field. And meanwhile, though there was still no sign of a London production for *The Professor's Love Story*, in December there was another tribute in the world of books. An expensive, illustrated, limited edition of *A Window in Thrums*. Both flattering and profitable. And with the pledge to Maggie embodied in it, for this issue carried a new dedication to "the Flower of Manhood . . . the late Rev. James Winter, M.A."

He took her to the seaside for Christmas and a bit of January. To lodgings on the south coast? We mustn't say so, because we don't know. Neither letters nor note-books tell us; but here, before the year closes, is one extract from the latter which actually bears a date. It wouldn't, but for one reason. It is a dream that he had on Boxing Night, and even if all dreams weren't interesting—and especially when they are written down at once—it is still worth giving to show how everything was grist for the mill. So here it is.

"294. 1 Act play or story. Dreamt on Boxing Night, '92.

"That I was writing—not well—overworked. Dunn came in. [Dunn was managing editor of Henley's *National Observer*] about copy. Suddenly I wrote 'Murder &c.' & sprang at him, mad. He escaped, crying 'My God, surely not this!' I heard him coming back upstairs, & waited to kill him. He only locked door on outside, & went off. Then I realised I had been mad for some minutes—saw clearly he had gone for help—agony. I felt I wd be taken to asylum, my grief was mostly for Maggie, felt *must* prevent for her sake. I planned scheme—when Dunn returned with Doctor & two men, I writing quite calmly. They puzzled. Doctor looks at me doubtfully. Dunn implores me to say he wasn't mistaken (or he is mad). I took doctor aside and convinced him (after he narrowly examined me) that Dunn had been queer in my rooms. Then I got them out, myself cleared of suspicion. Then woke up shivering.

"Adapt this. Suppose self married had refused to go seaside with wife tho' overworked—now we're to go—she knows nothing

—Dunn might have been lover of my daughter, whom I had refused to give to him—now give her because feel have wronged him. End, left alone. I say 'My God!' &c. (After left alone when Dunn leaves I cd plan out scheme without words).

"Title. '*A Warning*.' "

Extraordinary. One almost defies anyone to make a play or story from it as it stands. Perhaps there are clues that are missing; or perhaps they were always missing until the whole thing fell together at some secret touch. Yet there are two comments which are easy to make. He wasn't only dreaming of strain and overwork. And who, if he had to dream like this, would be a man of genius?

1893. Back in London. Working on the comic opera. Working on the novel. Working all the time. But with more headaches, and as always with that special and perhaps inherited tendency to heavy bronchial colds. Early in February he travelled north, not meaning to pay more than a brief visit, but in Edinburgh he was taken seriously ill—a mixture of nervous breakdown and bronchitis. His sister went up to him, and Miss Ansell—leaving the cast of *Walker, London* within a fortnight of its first anniversary—accompanied her. Was out of the bill, in fact, for some reason, for four months, though Barrie had recovered long before that. But D'Oyly Carte had planned to produce in the early summer, and his new librettist was quite unable to put on the necessary spurt. He had finished the first act and part of the second, but time was passing and somehow the whole thing had become rather a nightmare to him as well. For once he just knew that he couldn't complete it single-handed. So he called in Conan Doyle.

An odd choice? Not really. They knew and liked each other, and Doyle, who would write more than one successful play later on, was already interested in the stage. Incidentally he was a far better versifier. And, again, he was outstandingly good-natured. So he set to work on the existing scenario, and finished both dialogue and lyrics for the second act, as well as considerably improving some of the lyrics in the first. By April, when—as a sign of lifting clouds—Barrie had taken his sister to rooms at 113, Piccadilly, where the Park Lane Hotel now stands, the opera was ready to rehearse. Again a large and a small author were working together in a shrouded theatre; the small one still producing queer and not always accept-

able afterthoughts, and the large one so good-natured that anyone wanting a bigger part had only to mention it to be immediately obliged. Carte, Mrs. Carte, and their stage director were all trying to get things straight. No doubt the composer had his own points to put forward. Considerable chaos in the Savoy Theatre, and a good deal of anxiety by this time. But of course they had all gone much too far to think of turning back.

The title, which was Barrie's, had now been announced as *Jane Annie*—in odd honour of the one sister who could never even hope to see a performance. *Jane Annie*, or (for at the Savoy all operas had a secondary title) *The Good Conduct Prize*. Rutland Barrington was a comic Proctor. Walter Passmore was one of his bulldogs. Other Savoyards were doing their best to fit themselves into characteristic yet curiously unaccommodating parts, for though the whole thing is closely modelled on Gilbert, there isn't a spark that could have come from his pen. While the original author was now suddenly seized with an idea not only for promoting a page-boy to a position of mysterious importance, but for adding his alleged marginal notes to the book of words—which at the Savoy was always printed and offered for sale. Was he feeling reckless again? Were impudence, and the itch to treat the theatre as a place where any wild experiment was possible, so strong that in the confusion there was no one to hold him back? Or were these just gestures of impulsive defiance from an author who knew by this time that only a miracle could bring a success?

In any event there was no miracle. The opera was produced on Saturday, May 13th—when *Walker, London* had been running for just under fifteen months—and fell completely flat. Barrie and Doyle attended in a box, but there was no call for them, and they knew, long before the evening was over, that the hopeless game was up. *The Times* on Monday, overlooking the fact that this was at least the third attempt to find a substitute, spoke of the "abrupt change from Gilbert and Sullivan"; adding, with mordant understatement, that it lacked the continual play of brilliant dialogue. In fact, though it was actually kept going for seven weeks, it was one of D'Oyly Carte's worst failures, and nobody seems to have considered it anything else.

Barrie held his head up. It was a blow, but somehow it seemed impossible to accept the implication that it was his own fault. For these things didn't happen to the essential Barrie, and as the

authentic Barrie's spirits rose, he sent his collaborator a parody of the Sherlock Holmes stories in which the two of them and their disappointment were riddled with airy fun. Doyle, licking his own wounds, wondered for a moment if he were amused. Good nature triumphed. He shook his head, and began to laugh. Even the Cartes discovered a good deal of rueful consolation; for Gilbert and Sullivan had patched it up again, and were working hard together on an opera for the autumn—almost, it seemed, in the good old way.

For Barrie, however, and for Doyle too, there must still be at least one more theatrical reverse. A misguided actor-manager, Charles Charrington by name, had accepted the little play about Becky Sharp, and was proposing—which was possibly even more misguided—to put it into a quintuple bill. From Doyle, and for the same purpose, he had taken a one-act offering called *Foreign Policy*. From Lady Colin Campbell *Bud and Blossom*. And from Mrs. W. K. Clifford *An Interlude*. For the fifth playlet Barrie—who may very likely have wished Doyle on to the management too—had persuaded Hardy to dramatise his own story *The Three Strangers*, and as *The Three Wayfarers* it completed the bill. More hope, and more rehearsals. At Terry's Theatre this time, which was on the south side of the Strand, just where Messrs. Woolworth have since put one of their sixpenny stores. The names of the authors and authoresses were certainly all right; but, alas, not much else. The programme was presented on June 3rd, and the Press, inevitably tempted to the most odious comparisons, were on the whole least merciless to Hardy. For the next three places there was some difference of opinion. But none about the last. *Becky Sharp*—in which, by the way, Miss Janet Achurch (who was also Mrs. Charrington) played the title-rôle—was unanimously rated as the feeblest of the lot. "At once diffuse and obscure," said our old friend *The Times*. Other critics were even blunter than this. The whole unfortunate venture lasted exactly one week, and though *Jane Annie* was still struggling along to half-empty houses, Barrie had now had two failures in less than a month.

Had the theatre finished with him, then? It had certainly dealt him a couple of sharp blows, yet quite half his ideas now had scenery and footlights in their very essence. He was still fascinated. And always there was that studied ability to show, and thus presently to feel, the most extraordinary detachment from this kind of rebuff. It wasn't exactly self-assurance, though in a way that came

into it. It wasn't exactly philosophy, though that was present, too. It was more as if he had an actual relish for disappointment, and certainly he had a relish for disappointing anyone who expected him to be disappointed. He appeared to withdraw from all interest and responsibility in the matter. As an eyebrow lifted, you could almost hear him saying that a play was only a play. Meanwhile, he was back on the novel. He was leading the Allahakbarries in the field again. And then, at the end of June, he took his sister north with him—but there was a new reason, and well he knew it, why their life together was already drawing to an end—to make what was almost certainly his first appearance as a public speaker.

Of course when he wrote *The Greenwood Hat*, and the novelist had to keep on taking a hand, he leapt over at least two speeches of this summer, because he had found a funny article in the *National Observer* about a speech in the following January; and wanted to reprint it; and saw, quite rightly, that it would be more effective if he said that he had never spoken before. From this trap the newspaper files have saved us. On June 30th, 1893, he presented the prizes at the Dumfries Academy, and there is his address in black and white. Old schoolboy memories. Some of the little stories which those who have come thus far with us would recognise at once; including, of course, the eternal and untruthful story of how he had lost his smile. No one can pretend that the address reads well; but then it wasn't written to be read. It was written first so as to sound impromptu, and secondly to be acted even more than spoken. The pauses aren't there in print, nor the changes in pitch, nor the looks and movements which were so carefully rehearsed for every line. At a school prize-giving he can hardly have made use of his principal stage-property, the histrionic and almost vocal cigar. But the eyes and eyebrows were there, the gesture and at important moments the entire absence of gesture, the deliberate use of that tone of hoarse fatigue. Oh yes, he knew it all, and had even practised it on more private occasions. He would never exhibit this character that he had invented, unless he were fully prepared.

And a second speech this summer, in rather odd circumstances. The Auld Lights in Kirriemuir were pulling down their old place of worship, and were holding a bazaar to raise funds for a new one. Barrie, who wasn't an Auld Licht but had blazed the fame of the church that they were destroying right round the world, was asked to open the proceedings. And did so; a little sardonically, one may



imagine, under the surface, but with a rich flow of sentiment in his spoken words. No question now of being honoured in his own birthplace. There was a rush to the stall where the books which he had presented were on sale, and another immediate rush to get him to autograph them. Not bad at thirty-three. Perhaps he hadn't thought of this particular triumph, and certainly he was taking it without a trace of visible emotion; but there was special satisfaction—there must have been—in the knowledge that Kirriemuir, too, was sharing in the fulfilment of a pledge.

Back to Strath View when it was all over. Retirement, amidst admiring congratulations, into the recesses of his own mind. His mother was frailer than ever this summer. His father—seventy-eight now—still sat there looking stern and self-reliant, but in fact was no longer more than a respected symbol in the household which he had once ruled. He was puzzled and he was proud. But mentally he, too, was ageing, and every decision of the least importance had passed into other hands.

Jane Ann was forty-six. As devoted and self-sacrificing as ever. Plain, already elderly in appearance, with no chance now to develop her mother's conceit. Always watching her, hovering round her, taking care of her, sleeping with her at night. One can't look inside now, and one couldn't have done it then. But it wasn't only that she was so often tired, and with no hope of rest or relief while her mother lived. The long strain was sapping more than her spirit, while still she gave and was left with no alternative but to give. There have been hundreds and even thousands like her, and unselfishness, one knows, is the only virtue that really counts. Yet sometimes, as one also knows, there are pitiful and tragic rewards.

As for Maggie this summer, a hint has already been dropped. Was it Barrie's doing again? If we turn to *Tommy and Grizel* and study the story of Elspeth's marriage, there doesn't seem to be much doubt of it. It's a strange and contorted affair. The adoring sister, the brother who can't get rid of her, the amazing plots and schemes which he devises, selfishly but for her own happiness at the same time. Was this history, or if we take it as history are we going too far?

Yet Maggie had always done what she was told. She had mourned while she was expected to mourn. She had gone wherever it had been arranged. She had surrendered herself utterly to the protective kindness which had taken every decision off her shoulders and out

of her grasp. Now, after more than a year of it, her brother must have seen what he had also done to himself. He was saddled with her for life. She depended on him, as he had insisted on her depending on him, almost for the very breath that she drew. But how long, in fact, could he hope to go on like this? He wanted to come out of mourning, as it were, himself. He needed other interests, and his own friends, and the old freedom to see them when he liked. He needed something else, too; or at any rate, having put it out of reach, he found it nagging at him and troubling him all the time. He had dodged it even during his illness in the spring, but though he ought to have been stronger now, it still wouldn't leave him alone. There was a remarkably pretty face, and there was a special friendship which had lasted so long now that it was associated with half his thoughts. He was torn between temptation and duty, yet there was only one real obstacle to keep him in this intolerable state. Well, one knows what Tommy Sandys would have done. Nobody's feelings must be hurt, and incredible ingenuity might have to be employed. But Tommy would undoubtedly have found a way.

So Maggie got engaged again, and again her little brother offered his tenderest and warmest approval. For which there was every reason, for William Winter—yes, it was the dead man's brother who took his place—was honourable and reliable and as true as steel. Perhaps it would have happened anyhow. There is absolutely no doubt that if Barrie had objected to it, it wouldn't have happened at all. But it had, and he was going to be released. Perhaps he didn't want to be released now, and after all that he had put into the last engagement he could hardly go through the complete emotional programme again. But he had found a way, and William Winter, that excellent and admirable creature, had found a bride. The marriage would follow shortly, and very quietly; still half as if from a house of mourning, since Maggie, for her brother's sake, must still be at least two different kinds of heroine at once. There must be tears as well as happiness, for he had called her wistful, and wistful she was determined to be. Poor William Winter; for more than forty-two years he was the kindest husband that a woman ever had; but he was never allowed to forget that he was a substitute. His philosophy or the contentment of his simple nature must always start from this point. As for Margaret Ogilvy, she, too, could mistily welcome a solution, and yet mistily see him as an interloper. No, it can't have been an easy family to marry into now, as one

more marriage might still show. Yet in the long story William Winter takes leading and unobtrusive rank as a character of almost pure gold.

The house to which he took his wife, and where he went on coaching his pupils, was at Medstead, near Alresford, in Hampshire, and during the autumn Barrie spent a good deal of his time there. Generally speaking, of course, a newly-married couple might expect to be left alone; but perhaps he still felt the old responsibility, or perhaps his sister liked having two men to fetch and carry for her, or perhaps, again, he felt safer from something by still attaching himself to her side. The novel went to and fro with him, but still showed little other sign of movement. He was uneasy and he was anxious. For it seemed that in gaining his freedom, he had lost something else. He hadn't, it appeared, been nearly as ready to decide about his own future as he had supposed; but he was no longer in a position to keep everything in indefinite suspense. A clean break? Absolutely impossible. It was the very last thing he wanted. An announcement of his engagement? He recoiled. He flung himself headlong into his work. It wasn't a question of not being in love; but if one could stand aside like this, with cold-blooded interest even in one's own mental torment—making notes on it, too, or seeking the right phrase for some particular pang—then of course there was something terribly wrong. Back on the tight-rope. Back to the old problem of a choice between selfishness and unselfishness, in circumstances where it seemed utterly beyond him to say which was which.

Meanwhile, and as *Sentimental Tommy* still struggled along through its London scenes, here come two more authors, both sponsored by the indefatigable Robertson Nicoll, to put his native country still more firmly on the literary map. John Watson, who took the pen-name of Ian Maclaren, and S. R. Crockett were both also Free Church ministers; the former being ten years older than Barrie and the latter almost exactly the same age. Whether or not all three were members of the so-called Kailyard School is a matter over which knowledgeable critics have always argued; but for the general public they were, and for a while the general public certainly lumped them all together. Watson, at Nicoll's request, broke into the *British Weekly* in November this year, with a series of sketches which many readers insisted on attributing to Barrie. Even when

this was officially denied, its circulation still rose, and in book form there was a sale of three-quarters of a million copies in Great Britain and the United States. *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* was the title; followed by many others, though this still remained the favourite. In the same season S. R. Crockett published his first novel, *The Stickit Minister*; again there was more than a helping hand from the *British Weekly*, and another popular triumph. The Scotch boom was on, in fact, and continued to flourish, with its major and minor exponents, right through the nineties. Barrie, first off the mark, had good reason to feel that he had started it, and considerable human reason for jealousy of his successors and even slight resentment against Nicoll. Presently he will be meeting these two main rivals, and we shall see how they all get on. Meanwhile, whatever temptation there may have been to challenge and beat them on their own ground, his pen still refused to hurry or to leave the course which it was choosing for itself.

The London lodgings this autumn were at 14, Bryanston Street, still very much in the old neighbourhood, and towards the end of November he had another visit from his brother. Alick, who was fifty-one now, had already met Miss Ansell and had liked her. Now he met her again, and couldn't help feeling rather sorry for her. He was kind, sensible, a man of considerable experience, and with no pronounced prejudice against the stage. Again they made friends, and though he knew now how little his influence had come to count, he told her of his conviction that everything would still somehow be all right. In attempting to explain his brother's character, he was of course speaking by this time to someone even more familiar with its latter developments than he was himself. But Miss Ansell was touched. This was something much warmer and more understanding than she had ever had from Maggie, and in the extraordinary deadlock in which she found herself she welcomed and remembered these words. She had given so much, was ready to give so much more, and only wanted what everything had entitled her to expect. But she couldn't break loose, either. It wasn't destined, it wasn't possible, and it wasn't even her wish.

Thursday, November 30th. The baffling and elusive Barrie takes the chair again, at Solferino's Restaurant in Rupert Street, where the Allahakbarries are holding rather an informal banquet. He is in high spirits, draws roars of laughter with one of his speeches, and as a surprise for the members has prepared a twelve-page booklet--

*Allahakbarries C.C., 1893*—in which he has given full play both to his fancy and to distinctly uncomplimentary remarks about the team. But of course it's a happy evening, for in this circle—though he has to be captain—all are authors, journalists, or artists, and all are friends. It is in this republic that he shines and expands, and if only— Well, never mind. That was only a thought. And there would be many more meetings, and plenty of laughter, before the years took all this light-hearted companionship away.

But no more this year. Only a few hours later there was a telegram from Scotland. His mother was dangerously ill with bronchitis, and both brothers must hurry north at once. A bad scare this time. For a week or more it was touch and go. Her mind was far away, and Jamie must sit with her, though she scarcely knew him, or sometimes thought he was her father, the stone-mason; for only thus could she lie still or rest. Then slowly and once more the shadow passed. She was gaining strength. Soon she would be getting up again. Another reprieve, after all.

But her younger son stayed on. He and Robertson Nicoll had planned a visit this month to Maarten Maartens—the Dutch-Jewish novelist (his real name was Schwartz) who wrote in English and was at this time living in Switzerland. He had been over in London last June, when they had both met him, and both were equally enthusiastic about his work. In fact, he was a bit of a hero for quite a while; but of course Margaret Ogilvy came first. So Nicoll went off to Vevey alone, and Barrie lingered on at Strath View. He had the manuscript of his novel with him, of course; thought it would still take a year to finish, and meanwhile was finding it more and more difficult to make the child characters grow up. But he had got them to Scotland too—or at any rate it seemed that they had arrived there; and again if he were going to bring in the local scenery, this was the place to stay.

On Burns Night—January 25th, 1894—we suddenly find him presiding at a public dinner in Greenock; and it was this that prompted the anonymous article which appeared first in the *National Observer* of the following week, and then, nearly thirty-six years afterwards, in *The Greenwood Hat*. As you know, it was a description of his own alleged shyness, and the joke became better still, from his point of view, when loyal readers expostulated with Henley for publishing it. Or best of all when an evening newspaper said that the two authors must obviously have quarrelled. An effective bit of

impudence and mild mischief. Yet of course, as one can't help seeing, not a bad bit of artfully inverted publicity, either.

And so back to London, but not for long. On March 1st he was elected to the Reform Club, so that now there were four such establishments from which he could keep away. But by this time, if not earlier still, there were at least three reasons for returning to Kirriemuir. Continued anxiety about his mother's health; the novel, which had now clearly done with London for ever, and which he was determined to finish in one immense and concentrated burst; and thirdly— But there must be a new paragraph for that.

He was engaged at last. Officially, definitely, but still for some reason in the most absolute secrecy. His friends might go on guessing, but they mustn't be told. Strath View, however, must be told in person, and if his mother didn't approve, then of course the whole thing must be put off, and suspended, and kept in this extraordinary condition, until she did. Extraordinary if you like! A son and lover so detached from each other that they were hardly on speaking terms. Each set on his own course. Both stubborn. And both inhabiting the same little frame. Did one of them think that Margaret Ogilvy could still save him? Was the other as inflexibly resolved to get her on his side? Yet of course, so far as she was concerned, there could only be one issue. She might weep, for she wept easily, or she might be terror-stricken, for neither she nor her daughters could ever quite believe that actresses had souls. But Jamie had always got round her; for ten years, if not longer, her pride in his achievements had been the first thought in the morning and the last at night; and at any instant now that one half of him obtained the slightest advantage over the other, of course it would vanquish her too.

What, one may wonder, would have happened if Fate hadn't taken a hand? Nobody knows. Nobody can even guess. Even those who were closest could only offer evidence afterwards to show their complete confusion at the time. One mustn't be unfair, either; and least of all when the bitterness of memory would come to seek justification and inevitably put twists into the twisted truth.

This much is plain history. That Barrie, on one of his walks, lay down on the damp ground. That he caught a cold, and also what they call a chill. That as usual the weakest part of him fell before the attack. That as he coughed and gasped in this little house where there was at least one invalid already, the symptoms turned to

pleurisy and pneumonia. And that for weeks now no one could possibly tell whether he would live or die. The worst and longest illness that he ever had. And at first there was only that exhausted elder sister to fight for him, while she watched and cared for their mother at the same time.

So naturally Miss Ansell came north—plucky as ever, and with good reason for that look of challenge this time—and if she hadn't come north, there would have been no more books and no more plays. And kind, competent Dr. Murray—the brother-in-law from Bristol—left his practice and flung himself into the fray. Together these two took over, and battled, and went on battling, and won. Only just; but they'd done it. Slowly the dreadful tide receded. And slowly—but, oh, so slowly—the patient was beginning to regain his strength. The beard which he had grown was removed by a local barber, who—as the patient could now appreciatively note—repeatedly hit his head against a gas-bracket in the low room. And now the patient was tottering out. And presently, though still unsteadily enough, he was actually swinging a golf-club.

It was June by this time. The newspapers had followed the long illness with both accurate and inaccurate reports. Now there were two other items to be added before the month was out, though still the inward significance of both must escape them. In the first place, then, E. S. Willard was back in London after four years' absence, and suddenly the English rights of *The Professor's Love Story* were wanted after all. It was Addison Bright, now and henceforward Barrie's sole and invaluable agent, who handled this business; and somehow he seems not only to have secured a flat-rate royalty—for sliding-scale percentages were still frowned on by managers—but to have bargained for it to cover any future American performances as well. The original contract was rescinded, and Willard, who had rented the Comedy Theatre from Comyns Carr, could now show his British public the play which Irving had rejected nearly two years ago, and in which he had been scoring on the other side of the Atlantic for a matter of eighteen months. Rather strangely—for you would have thought it important to return with a flourish—he actually opened his season with a week's revival of *The Middleman*, by Henry Arthur Jones. But already its successor had been announced; and at last, on Monday, June 25th, its hour arrived. To-night, for the first time in England. Mr. E. S. Willard and Company in *The Professor's Love Story*, by J. M. Barrie.

So here it was, after all the disappointments and delays, and Willard, it seemed, had done the trick. For the reception was more than friendly, and although the critics felt bound to point out that the story was improbable (which it most certainly is), and to show the author that they were watching him pretty narrowly now for any more mistakes, their notices quite clearly referred to a success. Not a riotous success, as with *Walker, London*, for the cast had fewer favourites and a light comedy hardly ever struck the rich oil of a lucky farce. For a time, indeed, there was more praise than support, and it nearly came off after the first month. But the bookings went up, it hung on, and now it was doing better every week. For there was something in it that puzzled and even affronted a number of playgoers, but there were others—and more and more of them—who fell complete victims to its freshness, its queer, surprising flashes of observation, and its charm. Some, indeed, found so much enchantment in its artlessness and cunning that two or even three visits left them eager for more. They talked about it wherever they went. They couldn't leave their friends alone until they had seen it too. A very useful body, fore-runners of thousands in not such a very distant future. The early Barrie fans; hard put to it sometimes to explain what had bowled them over, or why they came out from a comedy blowing their noses, snapping at anyone who spoke to them, yet suddenly chuckling at the same time.

It was a delicious play, though—which presently would also begin dating, of course, but not for a long while yet—and Willard gave a delicious performance. Laughter, satire, sentiment; the full development, at the close of the third and last act, of that shadow-scene from *Walker, London*; and a sort of kindness to every character, whatever they might be up to for the purposes of the plot, which made the audiences feel kind and happy, too. They were rolling in so steadily now that at the end of the seventh week, when his lease expired, Willard moved on to the Garrick. Stayed there till the end of October. Took the play on tour. Brought it back in the following autumn. Took it out to America again. And so on, as we said before, for the rest of his stage career. Whenever in doubt, or whenever another play had let him down, he was always safe for a while with *The Professor's Love Story*.

But the author, of course, still hadn't seen it, for in June, 1894, he was still convalescent in Scotland, and only telegrams and then letters and newspapers could tell him what was happening in



London. He needed a success—not desperately, it is true, for he had lived cheaply in a cheap age, and already must have saved even more than he had given away. But the end of the novel was still out of sight, he had written no articles since the beginning of his illness, and the book royalties might well seem more likely to diminish than to increase. Now, for a few weeks at the very worst, he was at least sure of ten pounds a performance. Fortune, perhaps, hadn't really meant to frown. And now also—for we haven't forgotten that second item of news—more paragraphs, on a far more intimate topic, had suddenly started appearing in the Press. He most certainly hadn't sent them, but even in the nineties—reserved and discreet as the wording might now seem—the papers dealt in scraps of personal gossip; all through his illness reporters had been asking questions and collecting stories; and nothing could stop them, because nothing ever could or can. It was their job, of course, unwelcome as they were on the door-step of Strath View. So they did it. The distant sub-editors did what was again no more than their normal and natural duty. And suddenly all the friends who spotted that interesting statement were writing to ask if it were true.

Some, bolder still, came out with their congratulations at once. And since it was perfectly true, even Barrie could hardly deny it. He responded guardedly, for he had to show his displeasure with the rascals who had rushed it into print, but he couldn't altogether hide the warmth in his secret heart. Yes, Miss Ansell had done him the honour to which reference had been made. They were to be married almost immediately, so that she could take him abroad with her at once. For a month at least; and with a suggestion that even this was mainly under medical orders. But he couldn't quite keep it up. Somewhere in every letter his hope and his happiness broke out, and anyone who read them and missed this would have fallen into a very simple and obvious sort of trap.

For people can say what they like, and presently if not already they will be saying that authors always marry their leading ladies, or that patients always marry the women who nurse them, and other things, even crueller and more unjust, as the story goes on and as this marriage nears and then crashes on the rocks. But it didn't start like this, even in that complex and insidiously self-defensive mind. Nor, if you please, is one marriage in a thousand so clear and straightforward, either physically or emotionally, that A loves B, and B loves A, and that's the end of it except that they live happily

ever afterwards. But that there wasn't love on both sides, in however subtle a synthesis from all possible ingredients, just mustn't be believed.

When love dies, nothing is so dead, for then even those who have loved will deny, or can forget, that it ever lived. Yet in this case, again, it was never truthfully forgotten. It was starved, it was betrayed, it was wasted, misused, and maltreated. It was smothered, and neglected, and then flung into a legal grave. Yet secretly it was still remembered, with gratitude, with appreciation, and with lasting regret. These two might so easily have been luckier; but the odds were against them; the synthesis, in the end, was too strange. An end, though, so far more for pity than for blame. Perhaps, as much as anything else, it was the world that did it; and it is the world, also, that bought the right, in box-offices and book-shops, to learn at least something of what it had done.

That isn't an apology. Or special pleading. It's just a plain and rather appalling fact.

On Monday, July 9th, at his parents' residence—as the Scottish law allows—Mr. J. M. Barrie was married to Miss Mary Ansell. The ceremony was of a very quiet character, owing, it was understood, to the state of the bridegroom's health. After it was over the newly-married couple left immediately for Switzerland.

#### 14

It was quite true that Barrie was a sick man still. Even with all the care that his wife took of him, he could still catch cold or flare up with a temperature on very slight provocation, and such setbacks were an anxious sort of accompaniment to a honeymoon. But the new game that he was playing—if one may be allowed, in this instance, to use such a description of marriage—brought plenty of happiness as well. He liked being spoilt and protected. He liked the escape to solitary companionship. He liked, as is intended, the sense of achievement; and of course he liked it when other guests in the hotel turned their heads to stare at his remarkably pretty wife. He was doing no work yet, and not much in the way of walks. But so much that had alarmed him in prospect seemed suddenly to have been taken in his stride. It was all curiously unlike what he had imagined—or, in other words, unlike the articles in which he had

so often posed as a married man—but if this meant that he were missing something, there was plenty to take its place. Perhaps, after all, he wasn't so different from everyone else as he had supposed. But if he were, then on the whole he was amazingly and impressively adaptable. Time and experience were rushing along with him, as on any and every kind of honeymoon. For once, even as he tried to watch himself, he could only catch a glimpse of his own coat-tails. It had become natural, in the most astonishing manner, to write letters in which he spoke of "my wife." Who would have thought it? He was doing pretty well, wasn't he? Besides, and in any case, honeymoons aren't really as difficult as all that.

It was in Lucerne that the Barries saw that litter of St. Bernard puppies, and it was Mrs. Barrie, at first, who had simply got to have one. She loved animals, and they loved her, too. But it was Barrie who could put them under another of his own and special spells. So they made their choice, but as the puppy was still too young to leave its mother, it would have to follow them a little later by itself. Farewell to Lucerne, to Pontresina and the rest of their holiday tour. Back to England, and back, at last, to the novel. But other plans still vague. They had both agreed that wherever they settled it should be somewhere in the country; but at present had no particular district in mind, except that it should be within an hour or so of London. Meanwhile, *The Professor's Love Story* was taking comfortable care of their income.

In the early autumn they paid a longish visit to the Winters at Medstead. The puppy had arrived now—about twice as large as when they had last seen him—and was still growing almost visibly every day. His name at first was Glen, and then it was Porthos, or occasionally Glen Porthos, and finally Glen was dropped altogether. Just Porthos, which was also, you may remember, the name of Peter Ibbetson's St. Bernard; but if it comes to that, when dogs are large and gloriously greedy, it's as apt a name as anyone could find. He was brown and white, with the saddest and noblest of expressions, and the red haws which the ignorant always take to be a symptom of sore eyes. But at present he seemed strong enough, barked booming, panted deafeningly, and when he stood on his hind legs was already nearly as tall as his master and mistress. The latter washed, brushed, and combed incessantly. The former immediately began introducing him to a number of ingenious games. He was a lucky dog, but he was also a dog of immense character. A

literary dog, too, not only because he comes into *The Little White Bird*, but because for years he was always sleeping or watching patiently while his master wrote. The arrangement was mutually understood, as also, for a long while yet, that his mistress should be sitting there too. It was thus that *Sentimental Tommy* went slowly forward; but in all this domesticity, and in a year with no permanent or settled home, there were many days and even weeks when no writing was done at all. The games, and talks, and walks would often come first. There was still no urgency, health was still a recurrent handicap, but above all this was the first year of marriage and there had been quite enough pressure and drudgery in the past.

In November the three of them moved to lodgings which the Quiller-Couches had found for them in Fowey, and many happy hours were spent with Q and his wife and their little son. It was here that Porthos's legs grew so rapidly that he tottered as he walked, so that again the ignorant imagined that he was an animal of immense age. But of course he wasn't. He was barely six months, and the apple of his master's eye, as he took part in fresh games with little Bevil Quiller-Couch as an eager and gallant accomplice. Barrie loved that boy—who was to fall, still young and gallant, in the horror and heroism of war—and laid himself out to fascinate him with every trick in his power. Successfully? Of course. Quite as successfully as he would presently be turning his attention to three, and then four, and then five little boys at once. And there was another prologue, as it were, to a volume which is well-known (if by name only) to initiates, and must be mentioned later on; for he had a camera with him, and took some murky photographs of Bevil and Porthos, which his wife bound into a little book for him, and to which he supplied a brief story or commentary running from page to page.

All so long ago. All against a background of friendship and fun. All with that feeling of happiness and hope. The Quiller-Couches were obviously so exactly what a married couple should be, that they had to be shown how well at least one of the same parts could be played. Now to move on again, for a real married couple must still find a house of their own. Back, first, to Medstead, at the end of the year, and then on to London. Only as a jumping-off ground, for a home somewhere in the country still seemed best. Looking back to those six or seven weeks at Fowey as a very special kind of memory. Swearing to return, sooner or later; and continuing to

swear, as a matter of fact, for the rest of a long life. No shortage of pressing invitations, either; yet somehow Barrie never returned to those favourite scenes again. Too busy at first; just not quite able to manage it. Then the years rushed by, and he couldn't go back, because those same memories were too precious and poignant to be blurred. Farewell to Fowey. Now he, and Bevil, and Porthos have all gone, and only the little book of murky photographs remains.

It was in the third week of this visit that R.L.S., far away in Samoa, asked suddenly: "Do I look strange?"; lost consciousness; and never spoke again. Something more than a murmur of sorrow went round the world, as this dramatic and romantic figure passed on his way, and of course his little friend and champion must also give a sign. So he wrote a poem, *Scotland's Lament*, and sent it to Nicoll, who published it in the January issue of the *Bookman*—which he had founded just before *The Little Minister*, and had quickly established as another success. It wasn't a good poem; for even the feeling behind it was choked by the constriction of Scottish dialect and verse. Yet something at least emerged. Barrie and the dead hero were definitely associated now, and as the Stevenson legend began soaring to its greatest heights, the poet, or alleged poet, must now always be part of it. Not exactly by accident, and not entirely by design. Perhaps it is even one of the catches in literature that when one author offers tribute to another, he can only do so by getting his own name into print. There it was, though, and henceforth Barrie is accepted if not as a disciple then as one who must always be in on any further honour that is paid. Even Sidney Colvin won't be able to do without him. And of course, again, it all adds to the position which is becoming a little more solid and unshakable year after year.

Meanwhile, there was house-hunting, in various directions, but still nothing came of it. And there was a relapse, in a London hotel—though an honest biographer cannot absolutely fix the date—with a rather curious sequel. A titled lion-huntress descended on the Barries during this illness, and swept them both off beneath her roof. She flattered, she spoke honeyed words, she went through no more, perhaps, than her customary performance. But Barrie somehow got it into his head that he had made another conquest. He let himself go a little—one can picture the close interest with which he heard his own playful blandishments—and suddenly the huntress drew back. Hadn't meant anything like this for a moment. Stopped the

whole business, and brought her poor guest and victim up short.

Self-defence again. Not only this siren but all members of the aristocracy were a false, treacherous gang. Parasites who amused themselves by insulting their innocent and honest dupes. High moral indignation was immediately set to cover the scar, and though eventually there wouldn't be a trace of it—unless, by any chance, it was its hardening that would presently lead him to almost the other extreme—there was now as profound a fixation about ladies of title as there had once been about barbers. His subconscious was laying for them. His pen was on guard against them. Hence Lady Pippinworth in *Tommy and Grizel*, Lady Sybil Tenterden in *What Every Woman Knows*, and other little stabs of vengeance. It can't have been funny at the time, and it can never be really funny when a man makes a harmless mistake and is humbled. But such was the incident, and such the literary and dramatic results. And of one thing nothing could ever cure him. He might keep away from societysirens for a bit—and one wouldn't say that this was going to do his work or character any harm—but if a woman were pretty, he just had to pay her compliments. He knew how well he could do it, or how neatly he could dash off a little sentimental note. In mischief? Seriously? He was the last to deal with a riddle like this. He watched, listened, practised—and then spoke of philanderers with contemptuous disgust. Well, marriage for Miss Mary Ansell was certainly a liberal education, yet one shouldn't think of her as not valuing the instruction that she received. "I only loved clever men," she was to write later on. Note the verb. Put away the microscope. For both Barries were still a great deal happier than either had been before taking a notoriously perilous plunge.

What on earth, on the other hand, is one to say of this entry in a pocket-book, made long before the first anniversary of their wedding?

"125. Scene: Husband taking notes of wife's quaintness, &c., for novel. Her indignation—a quarrel—till he promises never to do it again. (Then he takes a note of this!)"

That exclamation mark is Barrie's. Is there anything to be done, except possibly to add another?

What with illnesses and absence of any settled quarters, there was still very little writing in the early part of 1895. Meredith, now more and more of an invalid himself, was in London consulting specialists,

and the Barries dined with him. Here was another with a particular affection and admiration for the pretty bride. But there was also a typical tiff with Robertson Nicoll. In *Woman at Home*—the third of the periodicals which he had founded—he was rash enough to publish Mrs. Barrie's portrait, and though this might seem harmless enough, he was up against the sternest taboo of all. Barrie had invented it, but Mrs. Barrie never questioned it; and with whatever motive this kind of attention was paid, they stood together in treating it as an outrage on good taste. Poor Nicoll. He may have suspected or even known—and so have others—that hatred of the spotlight was accompanied by a most distinctive ability for getting in its beams. But that wouldn't have saved him. He probably apologised before he was forgiven; and he didn't often do that.

In March there was another scare and summons to Strath View. The Barries, with Porthos, rushed north, and immediately went down with influenza. So did Jane Ann. Once more Margaret Ogilvy rallied and recovered. More delay to the novel, but as influenza ebbed, it began moving again. Yet its slow, fitful progress didn't only mean that an enormous amount of revision would be required. If it went on as originally planned, it would be about twice the length of *The Little Minister*, and Messrs. Scribner—still patiently waiting—could hardly be expected to cope with a serial like that. The only way out was to bring down a knife of some sort, and make the second half into a sequel. Solved, for the time being. For the moment, in fact, it was almost as if the real end were in sight, and there was a distant return to the old, happy absorption in paper and ink. In May *Auld Licht Idylls* was re-issued in another limited, illustrated edition, and this time simultaneously in New York.

The Barries were back in London, and house-hunting was at last showing signs of a practical result. Somehow the country plan must have faded away—perhaps there had been too much indecision or too many disappointments—for the quarry was now in Gloucester Road. Not, however, among the large and even then rather grim mansions that darken its northern reaches, but in the much pleasanter section facing one side of Hereford Square. Most of these smaller houses are quite low and were built at least fifty years before their mammoth neighbours; with little front-gardens and quite fair-sized back-gardens running towards Q's old home in Clareville Grove. One, though, must have been pulled down and rebuilt quite

recently, for instead of being in dark brick and stucco, it was in red brick, with stone mullions, ornamental iron railings and balconies, and a gable or two. From outside, in fact, it is unquestionably the ugliest house in the whole row; but it was the right size, its appearance at the moment was modern and even rather fashionable, and after all the hunt had been going on quite long enough. Presently, and as she developed it, Mrs. Barrie's taste and her original cleverness would enormously improve the inside. Meanwhile, after a final spell in lodgings and just about a year of marriage, the Barries and their dog moved in. 133, Gloucester Road, South Kensington. With a real study—it's the room over the front door, if you should be thinking of going to look at it—for the well-known novelist and playwright at last.

Their home and headquarters for the next six years. A house crammed full of personal and literary history. A house with happiness behind its plain yet elaborate features. It doesn't look as if it remembered. It still only looks as if it were wondering why all the other houses can't be a little more up-to-date, though it is getting quite middle-aged if not elderly itself. No, you wouldn't call it a house of memories. You could pass it a thousand times without guessing what was born and what began dying there. But at the beginning, of course, it was a pretty big symbol of achievement and hope.

So Mary Barrie set about furnishing it and making it ready—about which there was in one sense no difficulty, for her husband had four thousand pounds in the bank now, not to mention the best part of another thousand in the complete security of railway shares. Might have had less if she hadn't found a large, unrepresented cheque in the pocket of one of his old suits. But plenty to be going on with in any case, and she was careful as well as clever and quick. This was her job during June. Barrie, it seemed, in his spare moments, was to collect a team for a revival—after a season with no cricket at all—of the Allahakbarries *versus* Shere. He attacked it with spirit, as usual. Roped in Gilmour, Marriott Watson, Bernard Partridge, Charles Furse—who painted the portrait of Henley's little daughter which afterwards hung in the Adelphi flat—and Henry Ford, who had already begun illustrating a long series of fairy-books for Andrew Lang. Ford, in the unavoidable absence of Doyle, was probably the only real cricketer, but it was a glorious revival—except in the matter of scoring and taking wickets—and wound up with another banquet, after which most of the company



were supplied with beds for the night. The Captain in great form throughout, and demonstrating, to his own immense satisfaction, that even a married man could still turn himself and his friends into boys. Not that the wives, or as many as there were of them, were kept out. And not, perhaps, that they could ever be quite so young. But they applauded when applause seemed expected, and laughed, and enjoyed themselves, and never dreamt that women would one day bowl overhand at the Oval. Very much the peaceful, leisurely, friendly, untroubled nineties. Traps and wagonettes rumbling along the dusty lanes. All the old jokes, and personal remarks, and other established ritual. No, Hymen hadn't beaten the Allahakbarries, however difficult they might find it to beat anyone else.

July, now. Holiday-time approaching. The plan was for some weeks in Scotland and a return visit to the Engadine. A last note in London alludes to an evening's relaxation.

"153. *Music Hall* (Palace). When portraits of royal family flashed on dancer's petticoats, the habitués reverently took off their hats."

And so north, with a little tour in the Trossachs as the first part of the programme. But on August 2nd there was sad, though hardly unexpected news. Poor Joseph Thomson, seeking his lost health so vainly and so long, had been slipping backwards all this year. One climate after another had been tried—Italy, Mentone, Cromer—but all had failed. Now, three days after his return to London, he was dead. So Barrie mourned his friend and hero of thirteen long years, and stood by a Scottish graveside as he was laid to rest. Edinburgh, Tagg's Island, Highgate, Grenville Street, the ill-starred Continental walking-tour, must have passed through his mind, and all those talks of becoming an explorer too. Now it was too late. Thomson was dead, and married men who caught colds in summer and winter alike couldn't possibly go off exploring by themselves.

Yet there was Dumfries, and all the old, happy background, only a short distance from the cemetery gates. He turned aside, got into the train, and went back—as he had done so often as a schoolboy—to Forfar, and the little branch line to Kirriemuir. Thomson's brother, who was a minister at Greenock, was setting to work at once on a biography, and once more Barrie would pay a last tribute

in his own way. He contributed an Appreciation to the final chapter, and of course there is far more Barrie than Thomson in it—he even insists that Thomson's favourite novelists were Mr. Meredith and Mr. Hardy, which they may have been, though one can guess why; but it's skilfully written, and a very great deal better than *Scotland's Lament*. "I have known few men," it concludes, "whom I have esteemed as much as Mr. Thomson." He meant this, and more than this. The artful meiosis leaves that perfectly clear.

For another ten days or so the Barries remained at Strath View. It was on this visit, in all probability, that Porthos distinguished and disgraced himself by following them into the South Free Kirk, mounted the pulpit, and gazed quietly and nobly at the congregation. And again, in all probability, it was during this visit that Barrie tipped one of his little nieces with a half-crown which he told her that he had stolen from the plate. But even if Kirriemuir had learnt of the second incident as well as the first, it still would have done little more than click a forgiving tongue. He couldn't do wrong there now. And no more, for his sake, could Porthos. As for Mrs. Barrie, actress or no actress, Kirriemuir found her absolutely fascinating. It stared at her pretty clothes. It wagged its head in the warmest approval over everything that she did and said. It glowed, and as it glowed it shared in its own hero's profoundly complimentary fame.

Thus, or so it seems when old memories are urged into the witness-box, did the little town nod and beam in that distant August, and Strath View also basked in the rays of its sun. Margaret Ogilvy gave less anxiety in this mild weather, and even when she was furthest away, there was one voice and presence that could still soothe her and make her smile. There would be no real danger before the autumn, surely, with that faithful yet secretly tormented slave and guardian always on the watch. In any case the plans had been made, and there had been partings before now. Letters could still, if necessary, give warning. And a married man, or even this married man, must realise that the holiday so far was hardly a real holiday for his wife. Besides, he wanted to lord it over waiters in restaurants and hotels again.

So half-way through August Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Barrie set off, for the second time, for Switzerland and the Engadine, with rooms already engaged at the Maloja Hotel. The note-book went with them, of course.

- "158. *Coire to Engadine*. Small corn (wheat fields) look like doormats.  
160. *Engadine*. Men come in to dinner behind wives as if tied to string.  
162. Bald-headed man with few hairs carefully spread over like fiddle-strings.  
164. *Calm*. Flag at Engadine hung round its post, looked like closed umbrella."

And a suffix to an earlier note about the bracken in Scotland, and how on hill-sides it always seemed to be marching up-hill:—"Firs in Engadine coming down-hill as if had had enough of it."

But the Barries hadn't had enough of it. For this sort of thing was still an adventure; an escape, and a contrast with leaner outings in the past. And a year ago one of them had still been practically an invalid, and the other more than half a nurse. Now they were tasting comfort and luxury as they were meant to be tasted, they were coming into what the world had owed them, and they could go on their various expeditions without constant caution or fatigue. Here they were, in fact, like people in a book or on the stage; talking of which, it was now certain that Scribner's could start serialising early next year, the sequel was already accumulating a mass of fresh notes, and Bright was continually insisting that *The Little Minister* could be turned into a play. Barrie himself didn't think so. At the moment, indeed, it was Bright who was actually tackling the job. Yet something might just possibly come of it; or if not, there might still be a play before the sequel. Quite a sprinkling of further notes for one, anyhow. By the middle or at the very latest by the end of September they would be back in Gloucester Road again. No more interruptions. Long, systematic sessions in the new study. Good to look forward to, and at the same time heightening the present feeling of truancy and well-earned grandeur.

Every day, so far, the usual letter had come from Jane Ann, and always, so far, with news that all was well. It came again on the first of September, and still with nothing in it to cause the slightest alarm. But a brief, five-word telegram followed it that morning and arrived only a few hours later. Jane Ann had died suddenly on the previous night.

No one had expected this. No one had been prepared for it. She had been the nurse, never the patient, and the secret, malignant

disease had been something at which even she had hardly guessed. She had told nobody for there had been no pain; only the gradually increasing knowledge that she was a little less able to bear her burden every week. And even if she had spoken of it, nothing by this time could have been done. Within barely twelve hours of the first collapse, and just half-way through her forty-ninth year, she was lying dead in the room—for she had none of her own—to which she had been moved. Her life of sacrifice and heroism was over. She was at peace and she could rest at last.

All Barrie knew at the moment was that he must get back to Kirriemuir at once, though the journey would take the best part of three days. They left immediately; reached London, it seems, on Tuesday, September 3rd; and before catching the night train for Scotland, hurried round to find if there were any further message at Gloucester Road. There was a pretty bad one. Alick and his sisters had already hastened to Strath View, but no one had been able to make their mother understand what had happened. They had tried. They didn't dare try again. They were waiting now for the only one who could pierce the mists and break the dreadful, dangerous news.

Now came the worst part of the journey. He knew now how his sister had died, which was horrible enough, but the task before him must have seemed more horrible still. Somehow his mother must be told that her prop and her defence against everything had gone, somehow she must be comforted, and somehow she must be cared for, by further and unsparing sacrifices, through the rest of her tragic days. On went the train through the night. But the darkest hour—though others, from a distance, can see that it had already passed—was still, for this haunted traveller, to come. For all Sunday, and all Monday, Margaret Ogilvy had lain in that shadowy world where nothing and no one could reach her. But on the Tuesday, though still only half in the world that we know, she had risen, and gone round the house of which she was so proud; and though there was one room from which she was mercifully and with difficulty kept, it seemed, as she returned to her bed again, that somehow she knew the truth. Vaguely, and without apparent shock, for the mists were still hovering and most of her was still far away in time and space. But as she talked to herself she seemed to become smaller, and older, and every moment to be further and further away. Then the watchers knew that she was dying; but it was too late now to

send any more messages, and they knew in any case that Jamie would still come. She had been dead twelve hours when he and his wife arrived. She must have been dead when their train had left London. Tired, exhausted, and after three days of incessant anxiety and emotional strain, he reached his old home, barely a fortnight after he had left it, to find two dead women in two of the little rooms.

One knows how he could sink, and one knows how he could rise. He knew, also, that Death, having dealt the first blow, had been merciful in striking the second. But the dark cloud was on him, even as he stiffened and took charge. The mainspring of his life, though he had made it and wound it himself, was broken. He was dwelling in the past again, but there was no comfort in it now. Or he turned to the present, for the future was still unthinkable, and tortured himself again and again. Yet though grief such as this, perhaps, is always selfish, he could still think of others and how he could help them. He could still show strength and courage in facing what had to be done. Heartless, perhaps, to speak of him as acting now, yet if so—and with all that was so real one knows that it had to be so—it was a performance almost without a flaw. Nobody, of course, was trying to give a better one. But little Barrie, as mourner and as the rock to which the whole family clung, contributed every ounce of his genius and power.

On the following Friday—exactly a month after Joseph Thomson's funeral—Margaret Ogilvy, wife of David Barrie, and Jane Ann Adamson, their second daughter, were buried together in the hill-side cemetery that looks down on the little town. It would have been the mother's seventy-sixth birthday, if she had lived. Barrie supplied a new tombstone—for the three children whom she had lost were lying there already—so that her name should now come first. The lower half was left blank, for a purpose which no monumental mason has ever inquired, and to-day there are seven names in all. The sixth is his father's. The last, as simply and uninformatively chiselled as the others, is his own. The snow falls, the winds blow, and the sun shines on that beautiful Hill of Kirriemuir. And for the sake of this last name all are honoured; for it is inscribed on something far softer but far more enduring than stone.

The sad little gathering dispersed, and now, for the time being, one hears no more of Strath View. For twenty-three years David

Barrie had lived here, and for a short while he would be here again. But if he stayed on now, there could be no one to keep him company, for all but one of his surviving children were married and had homes of their own; while Sara, the only unmarried one, was now his brother-in-law's adopted child. It was this household, in the manse at Motherwell, that he joined; and a few months later, when David Ogilvy retired—after fifty years in the same post—all three moved to Edinburgh. Strath View, as you may remember, was David Ogilvy's property, but nobody—after all that had happened—felt like living there just yet. It was shut up, with all its memories, and the room in which so many thousands of words had been written. Presently, perhaps, life would enter it again. But Barrie—our Barrie—returned to London a few days after the funeral. Very quiet and silent, more than alarming to friends who attempted to express their sympathy, full, as always, of ideas for his work—and with the beginning of one idea that would soon take precedence over all; but quite determined that nothing, while the whole background remained so unbearable, should draw him even within distant sight of Kirriemuir.

## 15

If one could see it as an ice-cold actuary, or even as something considerably less inhuman than that, to lose a physically and mentally ailing mother at the age of seventy-six doesn't really put one in the same class as Job. Even the loss of an elder sister, only a fraction of whose life in this case had ever been her own, may be shocking and heart-rending, but shouldn't necessarily mark the end of all hope. It's that constant if magical hitting-below-the-belt in the book of *Margaret Ogilvy* that makes us, willingly or unwillingly, feel as we are bidden; that squeezes out our pity even as some of us resent the artifice that does it; that numbs our sense of proportion until we, too, while the spell holds us, must think in terms of utter and intolerable catastrophe.

But the author—who as yet was only planning it as a preface to his novel—had many other thoughts in his mind as well. It was 'right, for him, that his grief should hang heavily over everyone who knew him, and that they, too, should be oppressed and subdued. One knows also that a lifetime of mother-worship was so

much part of his being that it would always be waiting in the ink-pot as long as he dipped a pen. And one feels particularly, during this autumn, for the wife who was still young, who had hoped, perhaps to take a place which was now at any rate ostensibly vacant. And was learning, painfully, gradually, and more and more unmistakably, that she never could.

Yet all wasn't gloom in the house in Gloucester Road. The notebook this autumn shows plenty of liveliness, and no more morbidity than among the earlier entries in the past. It looks as though the theatre were still very much in the forefront again; not only, as was said, in the matter of plays, but in a projected series of sketches about stage life. And work hadn't merely been resumed as an anodyne. It was a habit again; the old habit back where it had been before. The sessions weren't actually systematic. They grew out of pipe-smoke and half a dozen different ideas at once; but the owner was always interested to see what his little box would yield next. He was in no hurry, though he never stopped. He was never afraid now that he couldn't earn more than a living. That kind of assurance hadn't been touched; and whatever else was waiting for him, there would, as a matter of fact, be no more crushing disasters in the years at Gloucester Road. Fate wasn't unkind to him there. He was to have his second chance, if he could take it. There was a comrade, at any rate, who still valued all that he gave her, and hadn't yet despaired of something more.

In the afternoons you may picture the two of them taking Porthos up to Kensington Gardens, through streets in which traffic, as we know it now, hardly existed, and in which a big dog could still saunter safely and at his ease. Barrie, in overcoat and bowler hat, as worn by all, but with a scarf to protect his chest, and a thick stick more suited to a country walk. Mrs. Barrie, dressed attractively, and still looking remarkably young and pretty. Porthos—or Glen, sometimes—vast, gentle, and apparently melancholy. But not really. For he isn't delicate yet, as he will become, alas, all too soon; he adores both his master and mistress, and this is one of the happiest times in the day. Watch him. He knows what's going to happen now. There's a toy-shop, and as he waits outside (he has stopped here, as he always does now, and stands waving his tail), one or other of his owners will go in and buy him a toy. He likes dolls even more than a ball to take up to the Gardens—"What age is the child, madam?" such shopkeepers are apt to ask—and has a passion,

though in this case he must wait till he gets home again, for anything that is wound up and runs about by itself. Not exactly mechanically-minded. There is something more maternal in his pleasure—though he has been known to show his love by swallowing or attempting to swallow a number of such gifts. The deep, booming bark shows that he has gratefully accepted another. The trio passes on, through Palace Gate, into the Broad Walk.

Kensington Gardens was wilder and less crowded then. There were more trees, no bandstand, no Physical Energy, no tarred pathways, and though you could always hear the thunder of the horse-buses if you stopped to listen, there was much more rustic mystery. So the trio could walk on long and almost lonely circuits, play hide-and-seek and countless other games for a St. Bernard's delight. Sometimes, it must be admitted, smaller children ran screaming from the noble Porthos, which obviously distressed him—so much that he had to be comforted, too. Or sometimes angry, ill-tempered little dogs would yelp, and fly at him, and fasten their jaws in his ruff; to which he paid no attention, but continued to stroll at exactly the same pace as before, until they dropped off from exhaustion and ran whimpering away. Gradually all regular patrons came to know and recognise the familiar sight of two little Barries and their gigantic companion, as they passed to and fro along the paths or among the trees. They were a nursery legend long before one of them made a new and written legend of his own.

Back down Gloucester Road to the house overlooking Hereford Square. If the Barries are alone this evening, there will be more games with Porthos later on. His master will wrestle with him, or run breakneck races up and down the stairs and all over the premises and estate. Or his mistress will dance for him, as he watches every movement with solemn, worshipping eyes. Or he will do his tricks again; drinking out of a tumbler, finding his "favourite author"—one particular and now rather tattered yellow-back—wherever it is hidden or tucked away. He thinks, it is almost certain—and like the woman in the toy-shop—that he is the child in this house; and so he is, though his master is another, and even his mistress, in this happy playtime, is no more than a little girl. Unnatural, say a few observers. It makes some of them slightly uneasy and uncomfortable, and where, they ask each other—for observers of newly-married couples can be extraordinarily inquisitive and impatient—is the real child? Well, there isn't going to be one.



At first there is hope, and then again there is hope, and presently doctors are consulted, and then for a while there is still the shadow of hope. But it fades. There is friendship, and companionship, and much more than this. Yet that murmuring from the observers, or the powerful, implacable force that makes them murmur, is slowly doing its fatal work. And the shower of gold is going to come into it. And something else; a blank blindness, so often when it most mattered, to the fact that we're not all children, however sensitively insensitive we may be; and that marriage, whatever the enormous variety of interpretations which it can still successfully include, in the end has laws and rules which nothing and nobody can break. When Barrie was an observer himself, he knew this better than anyone. But the trouble was, or is going to be, that a Sentimentalist—and these words are taken from a notebook of this very year—always asks too much of people. What's the use of knowing this also, if you still do it? Isn't it even more dangerous, because more misleading, than never realising it at all?

In those evenings, though, the Barries weren't always alone. They gave little dinner-parties, and they went out to little dinner-parties—to plays, too, constantly—and the circle was still expanding all the time. Old friends didn't find, or certainly no more than always happens when anybody gets married, that they couldn't still drop in when they chose. New friends couldn't help noticing sometimes that Mrs. Barrie was the only one who spoke—for the silences hadn't ended, any more than the headaches or the colds. But then again they would notice nothing of the sort. Barrie was in sudden, radiant, garrulous form. They were doubly charmed, by both their guests, or by their host and hostess, as the case might be. Delightful evenings in delightful company. What stories, what fun and wit, and what an attractive, amusing, and friendly couple they were. All this, so often, and not only on the surface, in all the years at Gloucester Road. So easily, in a way, it could have lasted for ever. And yet so easily that second chance was growing just a little fainter all the time.

Here, suddenly, is another dream. Headed, for some reason—like so many other mysterious fragments—"Play."

"On Oct 31, '95, I dreamt that going into Thomson's old rooms I found him there. Cd not doubt that it was he, but said I had been at his funeral. He became hysterically angry, & I felt it wd

not do to mention subject to him again. A character like Sara was much with him. In house belonging to T. I saw signs of foul play, curious servant, &c. Heard jeering laughs. Vague feeling that this man was personating T. to get his effects, that Sara shielding him for characteristic reasons. Began to play detective & woke."

Any remarks from the psycho-analysts? But we don't want them, thank you. We can see for ourselves how this comes from fatigue, and an ever-present undercurrent of morbid unrest. Yet what was he to do if he didn't work? And what wasn't work, when the habit was now unbreakable of halting every passing thought, and of turning it over, this way and that, to see how it could be fitted into dialogue or a page of print? The articles, which had started the habit, were a thing of the past now. But the author still had to pay for them, too.

The first Christmas in Gloucester Road. A parcel for Porthos, of course, for he adored parcels, and if he had had his own way would have opened every one that entered the house. Other presents coming and going. Both Barries almost immediately stricken with new, heavy colds, and Mrs. Barrie's the worse for once in a way. Swift end to a sad and unforgettable year. Now we're in 1896.

In January—or at least three and a half years after Barrie had begun writing it and Messrs. Scribner had begun asking for it—the first instalment of *Sentimental Tommy: The Story of His Boyhood* appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*. A long instalment, longer than any that followed, for it was the custom—as perhaps it still is—to start any serial with a broadside. In those days, also, this magazine, which had done so much for British novelists, was a much more prominent feature on British bookstalls. So that at once a large number of readers on both sides of the Atlantic were following Tommy's adventures, and would go on doing so, in this form, until the last chapter was published in November. But the author, meanwhile, was back again with the Little Minister. For Bright's dramatic version—the feat which Barrie had thought impossible—had shown, as one who tackles it freshly so often can, what an enormous amount could be cut from the story while still leaving a four-act plot. The flood had gone, the old dominie had gone, and even the minister's mother. The Auld Licht elders had been con-

centrated into four elders and no more. Complete disappearance of Wearyworld the policeman. The main love-story stood out far more clearly, and to make it clearer still there was no mystery now—except for the other characters—about Babbie's position and origin. The Earl of Rintoul had become her father, instead of her protector and suitor. She was Lady Babbie in her own right. But as there must still be a rival for her hand—for no rival, no drama—Captain Halliwell, the English soldier whom she tricked and bamboozled in both versions, was moved up into his place.

By this time, in fact, the scenario, though undoubtedly based on the novel, had really developed into a distinct and quite incompatible story of its own. One might say that only the setting—but this was still enormously important—and the telling contrast between hero and heroine remained. Shy, high-principled little Scotch clergyman, and wild, teasing, reckless, generous-hearted girl. But effective, and no more preposterous than what had been scrapped. Bright's industry and enthusiasm were something that Barrie could resist no longer. He had seen what could be done now, and his own interest revived. Bright dropped cheerfully back into his position as an agent—one of the keenest and cleverest there has ever been—and Barrie began Barrie-fying the framework with which he had been supplied. So much so that there would never be any question whose pen had marked every scene and line. But as yet, early in '96, the play was still in the workshop, and no management had even been approached. That would be Bright's job, and he wasn't overlooking it; but for the moment he had done all that he could.

Meanwhile Charles Scribner had had a very promising notion, too. In the autumn he was to publish *Sentimental Tommy* in book form, and Barrie was henceforward to be his author. But all these last years the pirates had been making hay—no one, in fact, has ever traced a complete record of what they flung on to the market, very often under titles of their own—and this was as galling to a publisher as to one who was already becoming a very loyal and devoted friend. Nothing, of course, could really protect anything that had appeared before the 1891 Copyright Bill. Yet there was still a method of dealing with new readers, so that both author and publishing firm should receive a remunerative share. A uniform edition. That was the first part of the idea. It wouldn't only appeal to the large body of American readers who liked to buy books in sets, but would definitely establish J. M. Barrie as one of a special and specially-

honoured class. The second inspiration was still more ingenious. The text would be slightly revised and a series of author's introductions should be added. This new matter could be copyrighted; or in other words, which the advertising must put beyond doubt, unless you bought from Messrs. Scribner you wouldn't be getting the official version and you wouldn't be getting the prefaces. Even that wasn't all. The Thistle Edition, as it was to be called, would have a couple of illustrated plates in each volume. And of course there must be a still more exclusive limited *édition de luxe*.

This was what Charles Scribner suggested at the beginning of the year, and Barrie agreed. He would write the new prefaces, amusingly and autobiographically, of course; he would even provide one—though this novel would be fully protected anyhow—for *Sentimental Tommy*; and the whole collection should burst on the American book-stores early in the autumn. So keen would he appear to have been on outwitting the pirates that he even supplied a photograph for the frontispiece of Volume I. And Bernard Partridge (in whose last cricket report he had written "When bowling keeps his own side busy") should be the principal illustrator. Further proof of rising importance. And an immediate, if rather overdue, tug at his tails from something even more relentless, in these days, than Fate.

Heart-cry (but with one good joke in it) from 133, Gloucester Road.

15 Feb [1896]

My dr Gilmour,

I meant to consult you about this last night. The fiends of the income tax are on me for what I am liable for. Do I pay income tax to them therefore from the year when I had a banking account (beyond that I don't know what my income was and don't want to know), or is there a limit of years beyond which they can't claim arrears?

Yours ever \*

Barrie Barnato.

And what is this abt taking the average for 3 years? Shd each year be calculated that way, and if so how if the years before I had a banking account come into the calculation? Then how shd I calculate '90 which was the year I began to bank?

Pitiful, but also, one must confess, rather enviable. He certainly ought to have been paying income-tax for the best part of ten years, but this was the first time the fiends had caught him. In those happy, far-off days, moreover, the standard rate was still only eightpence in the pound, and neither Super-tax nor Sur-tax had yet been thought of. What an age! And what a wonderful friend, once more, was the faithful Gilmour—now a full-fledged barrister as well as everything else. He rushed to the rescue, and seems to have cleared things up so quickly and successfully—but even the fiends were only minor fiends in the nineties—that in April a cheque for less than a hundred and fifty pounds had settled the whole affair. Work it out for yourself in eightpences. Or consider, again, what kind of income would yield such an assessment to-day. Not much, it may seem to us, to complain of. Or not much to keep Barrie awake at night. These were the years for authorship, with a rising market the whole time, and in this instance with America—where the fiends, also, were as yet the mildest of little imps—just beginning to pour its treasure into his account.

From now onwards, in any case, the faithful Gilmour resumed his position as financial expert and guardian. Only he, for approximately the next thirty years, had more than the faintest idea what Barrie was earning, how he was investing it, or of the value of his intricate estate. For Gilmour was now virtually his broker, too, and if he sometimes managed to lose a good deal—as undoubtedly happened during the most notorious of slumps—then one can only point out, first, that it was Barrie who insisted on his holding the post, and secondly that a great many professional brokers contrived to lose just as much for their clients, if not more.

But the friendship survived, however often and inevitably it was strained. There was something deep here, through all the alarms and complexities and upsets. For neither would ever really forget Grenville Street, and the years when they had been struggling for odd guineas side by side.

In March—this is still '96—the Barries had a week together in Paris; to which, from now onwards, they would return again and again. Strange scene, perhaps, for a Kirriemarian born and bred, but Barrie loved it, though he never went so far as talking French. Or never if he could possibly avoid it. Hotels and waiters supplied a strong need, though. There was still a very powerful and recurrent taste for being dashing. The record is lost, and could only be

monotonous if it were known, of the number of times that these little expeditions were made. Frequently quite a party of friends set off together, ate and drank, went for drives, saw plays and other sights, shopped if they were women, and thus—after a week or so of mutual merriment—separated with every intention of doing it again. If the host or captain, for he was always one or the other, went down with a headache, then as long as it lasted everyone rather wondered why they'd come. But if he didn't, or as soon as he had recovered, they were incomparable outings. He expanded, he unquestionably showed off a little, but indeed he knew how to make his companions laugh. Barrie the Parisian. An odd feature of the boulevards—if no odder, in truth, than many others—and playing a part for which he certainly didn't appear to have been cast. But enjoying it. Revelling in it. Coming back and criticising the French, of course. But only waiting for the next opportunity to treat this capital as very nearly the favourite of all playgrounds.

In March, also, S. R. Crockett spent a night or two at Gloucester Road; Nicoll by now having achieved one of his ambitions in bringing his special team of Scotch authors together. Crockett had already published two more successes since *The Stickit Minister*, and on the strength of them had left off being a minister himself. Barrie watched him, listened to him, heard long accounts of his terms and sales, was again a little critical and certainly a little jealous, but couldn't help liking him for all that. Didn't say much himself. Felt there was a difference, though, whatever Nicoll might suppose; and was perfectly right. Poor Crockett went on and on, with novel after novel—forty more, at least—until his death, just twenty years later, in the spring before the war. But as far as terms and sales were concerned he had already reached the zenith, and the rest of his career was a slow and then swift decline. Noted by Barrie; not exactly cruelly, but with distinct fatalism and calm. For it showed somehow, and again one of the secret hearts could always do with this assurance, that Nicoll couldn't just go about picking winners as easily as all that. No one must ever look as if they knew they had held the ladder. Only Barrie, and Barrie in the right and rare mood of sentiment, had permission to allude to it at all.

Meetings with Hardy, who was in London this spring. Visits to Meredith. A visit—Anchor Cottage again?—to Nicoll. And now *Margaret Ogilvy* was taking up most of the time. Already it was too long for a Scribner preface, and as it grew, and as more

memories were added, it was clear that it must be made into a book. And what a book! One has to say it again. A *tour de force* in autobiography and the cunning use of words. For of course Barrie is the hero—and literature the real heroine; he may not have planned this, but he never stands aside. He boasts, justifies himself, shows us his mother more as someone whom he created than as the woman who brought him into the world. For, again, though this is one of the few works that began and ended as it was meant to begin and end—after, that is to say, it left off being a preface—the author, who sat weeping as he wrote it, was still at the mercy of his incalculable pen. It insisted on dramatising and romanticising, and on exaggerating, and on twisting and turning the truth. It had to show how clever it was, even when it was pretending to be so simple. It had no shame. It was incorrigible. It was utterly determined to take this opportunity—for never was a pen more obstinately unscrupulous—of putting the whole story to its own use.

When it had finished, or at any rate as soon as the proofs were corrected, Barrie, as always, would never read what he had written again. So perhaps, in a sense, he didn't know what he had written, and it was the professional author rather than the would-be eulogist who had to let it go forth into the world. So far as he was concerned, he had paid his tribute, and there would be praise enough from tender-hearted or even from ordinarily cool and collected readers when *Margaret Ogilvy* took them by the throat. Of course it's a little masterpiece—unless your own feelings happen to hide this. For Barrie, also, it must have released something, for even telling the public what wasn't quite true was better, in his case and with his character, than keeping it all locked up. Complete truth—but who wanted that, anyhow?—might even have released him from the mother-complex, instead of leaving enough behind to fester or blossom for the rest of his literary life. The speculation is almost entirely pointless, because we know what did happen. There is one fact, though, that shows, and shows starkly enough, that not all the poison or fragrance had escaped and left him free. Not once, in forty-five thousand words of intimate self-revelation, does he hint that he ever became a husband as well as a son.

More cricket this summer, and again at Shere, though now there were enough victims or enthusiasts to raise two sides among them—

selves. Artists *v.* Writers. This, almost certainly, was the match in which Barrie arranged that the two worst batsmen in each eleven—he was one himself—should start by facing the two worst bowlers, and that there should be no change until a wicket fell. The result was an astonishing first-wicket stand by the Writers, though the score showed more wides than runs, and a swift rattle of bails as the two worst artists—in the cricketing sense—proved even feeble than the balls that they received. More laughter and ironical insults. The Writers' captain at the top of his play-time form.

Otherwise the summer of '96, in the study where Porthos lay and watched on the sofa, was mostly taken up with proofs. The prefaces. *Margaret Ogilvy*. And *Sentimental Tommy*, which was undergoing a good deal of revision as further slips and discrepancies came to light. Messrs. Cassell were to publish it in England, more, it seems, because they had published *The Little Minister* than because of any contract tying the author up. But Nicoll, the fierce yet emotional Highlander, had been completely bowled over by the shorter and later book, and had grabbed it instantly for his own firm. "The best of the books this year," he called it, and was deeply moved, and determined that Hodder and Stoughton should push it with all their might. Meanwhile there was another scheme in which he and Addison Bright were separately and simultaneously involved. But before we get on to it let's take another glance at the current notebook. For these notebooks, as we learn to read them, can summon so many a fleeting moment from the past.

Mostly, just now, the pen or pencil is catching scenes for *Tommy and Grisel* as they rise suddenly from the final touches to its fore-runner. But among the entries are others to show what was darting through the nimble though anything but scientific mind. In the first that follows one may not be able to identify the house, but can make a pretty good shot at the visitor.

"223. *Character*. Man not used to dressing-rooms—how did in big house—carrying clothes into it, &c."

Some glimpses of Gloucester Road and its surroundings:—

"225. *Annie's Boy*. Name printed on collar of little greengrocer's cart-horse.

"231. *Trees*. Chestnuts in park on windy day (May 20th)—



petals of flowers falling like snow & covering ground—white with dot of red—sun shining on afterwards.

"232. Suppose *dog* (St. Bernard) hates Americans (with tuft)—reason its parents watched goats in Switzerland (*Heredity*).

"237. *Birds* (sparrows) in garden bathing in water pool made by hose—lying on back & kicking like dog."

Another glimpse that can be dated, for it was on June 22nd this summer that the great Augustus Harris—*Punch's* "Druriolanus"—died at the early age of forty-four.

"240. *Theatrical. Aug. Harris's funeral. Alias* (theatrical costumier) said at grave 'If Gus had had the management of this he wd have said "This will never do. Back to your places & let us do the whole thing over from the beginning".' "

A slightly earlier entry, probably in the same month, epitomises a little anecdote told by Sir George Lewis—the very well-known solicitor in whose house the Barries would be seen so often before long. There must at least, then, have been a meeting by now. More of the Lewises, without doubt, as the story still unfolds.

But a page or so later this note-book, which had now served its purpose for more than two years, suddenly breaks off. There was another one—there must have been another one—for the visit to America, and again, in all likelihood, for the next two years that followed. But it's gone. Not until June, '98, is the elusive and often bewildering commentary resumed, and after that come three or four note-books—but clearly covering a much shorter period—in which no actual dates appear at all. So we are left now, for a while, without one of the principal windows through which we try to peer. But there are other sources, and we must go on doing our best.

America. That was the scheme which was now taking shape. Nicoll was going over, mainly on publishing business, and wanted Barrie to go with him. Bright, who was now closely associated with the remarkable New York play-broker, Miss Elizabeth Marbury, had—through her—persuaded a still more remarkable New York manager to enter into a provisional contract for the production of *The Little Minister*. The manager, whose name, of course, was

Charles Frohman, hadn't yet read the play, and indeed it is quite possible that he hadn't even read the book. But it was his life-long principle to buy—blindly, if he felt like it—on the rising market; to leave the encouragement of unknown talent to others. He had seen and appreciated *The Professor's Love Story*. And his lieutenants, not to mention Miss Marbury, would have told him that J. M. Barrie was very much an author on the way up. Napoleonically, he had made another of his swift decisions, and the contract was signed.

There it was, then, and with Bright and Miss Marbury to barter and to scrutinise each paragraph, it was a very different document from that agreement, five years ago, with Toole. And the play was finished, and Barrie, as Bright well knew, put spells on people. So that altogether—and if it wasn't essential, it was at least very good policy—Frohman might be flattered and any last-moment difficulties might be smoothed away, if the author presented his script in person.

Two reasons, therefore, for visiting America. But not quite conclusive. For always Barrie must suspect and recoil from a notion that Nicoll was trying to show him off. And nobody could be more obstructive, even with the most delicate handling, if told or advised how to run his own business. Bright was his friend, and an Allahakbarrie, but there could still be more than mystical obstinacy when he tried to be his guide or director as well. There were, however, two more elements. Mrs. Barrie was one, with a practical head on her shoulders and strong convictions about a tide in the affairs of men. The second, no less persuasive, but as a magnet rather than a goad, was yet another hero.

He seems to have been overlooked somehow, in the effort to avoid lists and catalogues, and among so many literary contemporaries with whom letters had by this time been exchanged. But Barrie had had an admiring eye on him for years, and is even said to have reviewed him, favourably of course, as long ago as in the *Nottingham Journal*. George Washington Cable, the novelist and story-writer of Louisiana, who had done for the Creoles what Barrie had done for the Auld Lights; revived the past, that is to say, and added a glamour of his own. Cable was over fifty now, and had been settled for more than ten years in New England. But New Orleans was still his Thrums. And as if this and what he had done with it weren't fascinating enough, he had actually fought (like Frank Millet, of Broadway, only on the other and even more romantic side) in the

American Civil War. So Barrie had started writing to him, sending him books and all the rest of it, and they were now, on paper at any rate, the firmest of friends; while in the London circle it had long been essential that everyone should read and admire George W. Cable, too. *Old Creole Days*—that was the first and perhaps the best book; and perhaps, if it comes to that, not one of them, in the publishing sense, is still alive. But Barrie was rather more than fervid about them, and if he went to America he could worship at the actual shrine. That was the real attraction. To meet and talk to Cable. So it was settled, and all the other plans must fit in as best they could. Nicoll would have his travelling companion, Bright and Miss Marbury saw their commission coming nearer, and Mrs. Barrie would have her own satisfaction, it was to be hoped, in sight-seeing and at the same time furthering her husband's career.

In August or early September there was a visit to the father, uncle, and sister in Edinburgh. Meanwhile Bright and Miss Marbury were in constant touch with each other and with Frohman, and Nicoll was already banging some loud preliminary notes on his literary drum. Not entirely about Barrie, though. For the Rev. John Watson—or Ian Maclaren—had also signed a contract, with the celebrated Major J. B. Pond, for an American lecture-tour this autumn; and Nicoll, as his friend and publisher, must be his prophet on both sides of the Atlantic, too. No awkwardness or backwardness where Watson was concerned. He had been a very experienced drum-banger himself, even before taking to authorship, and had no intention of hiding from the public now. The lecture-tour, in fact—with eighty engagements in less than three months—was an open and honest project for making his name still better known; and Nicoll, who saw him off from Liverpool, realised with unqualified admiration that he was just the man for the job.

Yet still he wasn't Barrie. His sales were bigger, and he was a far better collaborator in all the tricks of the trade; he was a delightful companion, and he was a minister—an extra and very special link. But Barrie, with all his obstructiveness and all his independence, was much nearer Nicoll's heart. He could be maddening, and difficult, and ungrateful, and then put everything right with a look or a word. He was an enigma, and Nicoll hadn't time or patience for people who puzzled him. Yet the spell was on him, and neither reason nor any of his ordinary prejudices could ever protect him for long. There was no chink in his armour, but Barrie could always

pierce it; though whether he knew what he was doing or not—Well, perhaps that was partly why Nicoll must always be exposing himself to the same process again. It just fascinated him. It filled him with almost superstitious awe. And then again, at least as often as not, there were the rewards—not to be measured in sales or anything to do with publishing—that nobody else could give.

So he might very easily have made the trip with Watson; but he didn't. He went with the Barries—wondering already, at odd moments, who was really in charge of the expedition—they sailed, from Liverpool again, in the *Campania* on Saturday, September 26th, and reached New York, early in the morning, on Saturday, October 3rd.

A deputation of friends—mainly Nicoll's—was awaiting them, but also a deputation of reporters. Barrie was caught. The record of which he had already begun boasting sustained one of its rare blots. There was a different source of annoyance for Nicoll, a few days later, when a chambermaid at the Holland House—the hotel where they were all staying—swept up the cuttings and burnt them; or at any rate this was what he was led to believe. But there were plenty of paragraphs during the next five weeks, though Barrie was never actually trapped again. And Nicoll had other consolations. He saw his own photograph in a book-store window, and Watson's—enormously magnified—had been splashed all over the hoardings by Major Pond. In fact, he was enjoying himself immensely, and what with business and American hospitality was having one of the most glorious times of his life.

On the very first evening Frohman had provided a box for the little party at the Empire Theatre. The play was *Rosemary*, by Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson. Its heroine, not technically a star yet, was Miss Maude Adams, and they were all very much impressed by her charm and skill. On the following day Miss Marbury called at the hotel and collected the script of *The Little Minister*. Frohman had promised to read it and give his decision within a week.

Frohman. Yes, but wait. He can't possibly slip into the story like this. He's far, far too important, though putting him on paper is a task at which anyone might quail. One can give some facts, though, and then presently, perhaps, his own bigness and simplicity will help towards the rest. At this moment, also—while that script is still in his third-floor office—he is no more to Barrie than a means

to an end. If they have met at all, in that box or elsewhere, it was only to exchange a few words, and not for the best part of another three years will their long, close, and intimate friendship begin. As yet, then, a mere outline of his history should serve us. For what follows, when the friendship really gets going, will always be a side of Barrie's history as well.

Charles Frohman was a Jew, of course, and no one could possibly have taken him for anything else. Short, and as the years went by increasingly top-heavy; for he took no exercise that he could possibly avoid and had an insatiable appetite for soft drinks and sweets. Large mouth, with thick lips—not coarse, though—generally holding a cigar. Dark and particularly Asiatic eyes, sparkling or impenetrable according to his mood. Curly, Semitic nose on an almost globular head. Quite startlingly delicate and beautiful hands. He would have made a very good idol, especially when sitting cross-legged—but for the inward energy that was always hurling him from place to place.

He was six weeks younger than Barrie, even more self-made, and from his childhood had taken no interest in anything but the stage. Once, it is true, he had been connected with a troupe of nigger minstrels—and wasn't the least ashamed of it—but the theatre, any and every kind of theatre, had always been his goal, and by bluff, and cleverness, and incessant hard work, it wasn't long before he reached it. Who can explain—who, indeed, can ever explain—where managers get their backing or how they keep their accounts? Yet Charles Frohman rose, on failures as well as successes; never really knowing, and not much caring, whether he were rich or poor; and establishing—despite this ignorance and the inevitable financial confusion that went with it—a reputation for such utter honesty that not even the bitterest rival ever doubted his word.

He lived for the theatre, and mostly in the theatre; he never grew tired of it, and always it held for him the same atmosphere of romance. He was a megalomaniac in the sense that he was happiest when eight plays were in rehearsal at the same time, or when sixteen theatres—in New York, London and Paris—were all announcing "Charles Frohman presents." But with that sacred slogan and the knowledge that it was true, all personal publicity must end. His stars and his authors—for whom nothing, while they were loyal to him, was too good—could have all the reputable advertisement that they liked; but for himself his place was permanently behind the

scenes. He didn't want to be recognised, or to be anything, to the public, except a mystic and all-important name. He was as genuinely shy as he was genuinely consecrated to filling the world with plays.

He put on something between five and six hundred altogether, and didn't really consider that even that was enough.

He was a tyrant, of course, but he was father to a thousand conceited, difficult, quarrelsome children as well. He was almost completely uneducated, but his mind was quicker than lightning, and no one could ever impose on him unless that were also his own wish. He brought fame and fortune to others, built up a vast organisation, lived for it, died for it, and never even owned his own car. On and on, with losses paid back somehow, and winnings hurled into fresh schemes and dreams. Enthusiast, idealist, cynic, humorist, hard-headed man of business, and emperor of make-believe. Courageous and humble. Obstinate and broad-minded. Strange touches of artistry under that almost grotesque exterior, yet suspecting them even in himself. A man with a heart in an often heartless profession. Gentle, dignified, fantastic, and absurd. No, there has never really been anybody quite like Charles Frohman, either.

There he sat, then, reading *The Little Minister*, and as soon as he finished it he had made up his mind. He summoned Miss Marbury. The play was all right, he said. It was fine. It had every chance of success. But unfortunately it was no use to him.

Miss Marbury kept her head, as she always did, but naturally asked why.

Well, said Frohman, the hero had the best part in it, and that was why. What he had been hoping for, and all he now wanted, was a play in which he could star Miss Adams. At the moment he just wasn't interested in doing anything of that sort for 'a young actor.

Miss Marbury still kept her head. It was a point that she couldn't argue; but she could fence. How would it be, she asked, if the author re-wrote it, altered the balance, and made the heroine the real lead? One gathers, as one eavesdrops at this curious conversation, how little either party was now thinking of the original novel. The inference is correct. They were thinking, quite justifiably, of the box-office and nothing else.

So Frohman found the suggestion admirable, though he also expressed some doubt as to whether even Miss Marbury could bring it off. For authors, he had noticed, were strangely stubborn, and

seldom more so than when attempting to dramatise their own books. Good luck, however, to Miss Marbury; though of course if she had anything else for Miss Adams, he would be only too glad to consider it.

Exit Elizabeth Marbury. The scene changes to the Holland House. The author is smoking, grunting, walking up and down, and, alas, being extraordinarily contemptuous about American managers. In fact, he says the thing can't be done, and he isn't going to do it. Yes, he likes Miss Adams; he admires her very much indeed; but when a play happens to be called *The Little Minister*, and to have been commissioned, apparently, on those grounds, is it reasonable or even practicable to turn it into a play about someone else? And so on. Miss Marbury pleads and cajoles. The author swings round at the end of the room, and eyes her as if she were an emissary from the Prince of Darkness. The negotiations, he indicates, had much better be dropped. It is obvious that he has come all this way for no purpose at all.

Yet Miss Marbury isn't beaten. At the end of the whole, protracted session—during which, however, she has a strong feeling that the author's wife isn't entirely on the other side—she has achieved this much. No final decision will be made to-day. Mr. Frohman can be told that his idea will be considered. It is extremely unlikely that it will be adopted, and in any case it must be months, and many months, before such radical alterations can be made. But if it pleases him, or Miss Marbury, or Miss Adams, to keep the thing open, then very well, and perhaps one will see what can be done.

This wasn't victory for either side—not that Frohman or Miss Adams would have felt more than passing regret at a defeat—but for Miss Marbury it at least meant that there was still hope; and, as she knew well enough, there was a powerful ally in the shape of Addison Bright. As for Barrie, he was still disgusted and disappointed, and there were still many moments when he was inclined to let the whole thing drop. Yet here he was in America, and after all there were other things to be done besides arguing with managers and agents over the mangled body of his unfortunate play. On with the visits and the sight-seeing, then. Back to the other part of the plan. Nobody had got him down yet, and in a way which was one of the real strengths of his character he seems to have put the whole problem safely into the back of his mind. There were plenty of other ideas for books and plays by the dozen. No setback was

really a setback with resources and a deep-down confidence like these.

There had been an invitation, a telegram awaiting the Barries and Nicoll on their arrival, to visit Lord and Lady Aberdeen in Ottawa, but from this one member of the party managed to extricate the whole lot. Cable must obviously come first. On the morning of Friday, October 9th—the day when they were all to go off and stay with him at Northampton, in Massachusetts—Nicoll, having just returned from a visit of his own, had the felicity of introducing Barrie and John Watson. Again, as in the case of Crockett, they eyed each other and appreciated each other, though the smaller author had to joke afterwards about Major Pond. A little jealous? Yes, just a little. And Watson was just a little puzzled, as he was meant to be, by a colleague who was so industriously hiding from the Press. Queer meeting of triumphant Scotchmen, with a third triumphant Scotchman reflecting and even remarking how he had introduced them both to the public as well. "You should have seen Nicoll," Barrie wrote to a friend when he got back, "gloating over the book-stalls." Sometimes, there is no doubt, these two tormented each other—for Barrie refused to gloat, and the more Nicoll gloated the colder and more impassive he became. There was also a quiet tussle for supremacy going on the whole time, with Barrie so often winning when the cards all seemed to be in Nicoll's hands. Appreciation here, too, of course, and afterwards they would both realise how much each had contributed, and what fun it had all been. But at the time it was rather an amazing expedition, and occasionally almost a running fight between the showman and the companion who was so singularly unwilling to take part in the show. And always there was the background of hospitality and hustle, and the need, even for Barrie, to be grateful for so much kindness and honour wherever he went. "We had a roaring time in America," he wrote afterwards; and they did, and he enjoyed it in spite of himself. Furthermore, the actual itinerary suggests pretty clearly that it was Nicoll who had to go where he was told.

They all enjoyed their long week-end with the Cables, though it appeared that a number of semi-public engagements had been arranged for them here, too. Yet Barrie wasn't only determined to worship his host—who turned out to be almost as small as himself—but succeeded with no difficulty at all. The literary men, he reported, were all good fellows, but Cable was the prince among



them. "The quaintest and most lovable of human beings. We were some days with him and they are my best memory of America." On the last evening he sang Creole songs to his guests, while accompanying himself on the violin, and Barrie retorted with his imitation of Irving in *The Bells*. Cable, he decided and insisted, must come and stay with him—whether it were a musical visit or not—as soon as possible in Gloucester Road.

Then to Boston, and another terrific outburst of hospitality and parties. To Harvard, Concord, Salem; and everywhere distinguished New Englanders, or the sons and daughters of New England's greatest names, welcoming them and hovering round them and leaving even Nicoll a little uncertain as to whether this extraordinary and royal progress could be real. "I did my best to be agreeable at the receptions," he wrote, "and I think I partly succeeded. One of our hostesses was overheard to say in the hall: 'Mr. Barrie is very quiet, but Dr. Nicoll is a most delightful man.'"

The fact is that Barrie, too, was beginning to wilt under it all, and to wonder how much longer he could shake hands or conjure up the ghost of a wry smile. Quite suddenly, and again as a tribute to Cable, he announced that they were all off to New Orleans. Fifteen hundred miles, perhaps, but it didn't look it on the map; and if he couldn't turn home yet, at least he was going to see some real Creoles and the scenes that Cable had described. Letters of introduction instantly appeared like magic, and no one in America thought the distance worth mentioning as an obstacle. Nicoll found himself jolting southward, too. Days and nights in the dustiest and hottest of trains. The Press waiting again to greet "Novelist Barrie," and Novelist Barrie again trying to dodge the Press. So this was New Orleans. It seemed very hot, very clammy, and far too full of smells. Further observation showed what Cable might have discovered in Kirriemuir; that no inhabitants of any town were quite as amusing and picturesque as when you read about them. And wasn't this the sort of place where one caught fever? General summary after the travellers had done their best to detect more charm than discomfort: What on earth are we doing here?

North again—two more nights and another day in the train—to Washington. Nicoll thought it a paradise for bicyclists, and decided to learn how to ride this vehicle as soon as he got home. Barrie was looking haggard and weary. They were both homesick, and they had both caught colds.

Back to New York on Monday, November 2nd. More callers and invitations than ever, for they were to sail on Saturday, and America was resolved that they should finish with a crescendo. It had even staged an Election Day to follow their return. Barrie saw Miss Marbury again, and though there was renewed talk of some form of collaboration, she felt now that he still meant to satisfy Mr. Frohman if he could. Again she emphasised the value of Miss Adams, and with this he completely agreed; for already this gifted and spirited actress had also cast a spell. Then he must sign the copies of the new limited edition for Charles Scribner, and dine with him, and go on to the *New York Herald* office to hear that William McKinley was romping in towards the White House.

On the Wednesday there was a theatrical lunch-party, and dinner with W. D. Howells. On Thursday both Scottish pilgrims were guests of honour at a banquet given by the Aldine Club, at which well over a hundred publishers and writers—including little Cable again—had gathered to thump on the tables and cheer. They had also engaged a piper, to march up and down and add to the din, and there were thistles and heather, and a haggis. Both pilgrims made speeches. Nicoll's was emotional and serious. Barrie's, as usual, was a dramatic monologue, with the cigar and other ingenious effects; entirely about himself; much funnier, no doubt, to hear than to read; and was received—even by a company which specialised in the oratory of humorous exaggeration and under-statement—with thunders of laughter and applause. They liked him. The evening was an enormous success. And the auguries for Messrs. Scribner's new edition couldn't possibly have been more encouraging.

One more dinner, as a slightly quieter but no less appreciative finale, at the Century Club. And on Saturday, November 7th, farewell to the United States. There was a roughish crossing, but they were all safely home again—after exactly seven weeks' absence—by the evening of the 14th. Nicoll at his house in Hampstead. The Barries at 133, Gloucester Road. Rapture of Porthos, who "could not make up his mind which of us to eat first—which was our saving." Reaction, speculation, and considerable fatigue. So that was America, was it? Well, what precisely had it done?

It had delivered, as it seemed, one rather ugly blow; for the play which had been taken out there must still be re-written, and at the best its production must be postponed until next year. On the other hand, the personal welcome which it had extended had been some-

thing almost beyond belief. All that had ever been said of American hospitality was nothing to the real thing, and exhausting as it had often proved, it was a stimulus that could never be forgotten.

And friends had been made. Not only Cable, who in a sense was a friend already, but all those literary New Englanders—the Nortons, William James, and many others; especially, perhaps, Hamlin Garland, who would remain a friend and correspondent until the end. And Howells, and Charles Scribner, and all those authors and publishers in New York. And another memory, enshrined in a letter written about two years later. "I once had the distinction of supping with Colonel Roosevelt. . . . We began at eleven and I left at two. He was still supping."

Yes, all rather tremendous to look back on, even though one must still criticise and poke gentle fun. America was finally conquered on that short visit, and the seed, though still waiting to germinate, had been firmly planted in the Empire Theatre as well. Not an America that we should recognise to-day. Simpler, for all its extravagant enthusiasm. Still looking to Great Britain, in spite of the New Englanders, as the source of its culture. Still nearer to the Civil War than to Talking Pictures. Still with horse-drawn traffic in its streets, and nothing that would now be recognised as a skyscraper. Ford, the Wright brothers, and even O. Henry, all alive but all unknown. The great days of Fifth Avenue, but the great days of the Bowery, too. Immigrants still pouring in without restriction. Wealth, squalor, and vitality still churning together as they chose.

A land of opportunity, and little Barrie had again timed his visit almost to perfection. Charles Scribner was ready for him, and Charles Frohman—whether he knew it or not—would be ready in less than a year. It all fitted, and it would go on fitting. But it wasn't, this autumn, as if England were being left behind.

Cassell's had published *Sentimental Tommy* (which one may note is dedicated "To My Wife") on October 17th, and though some of the reviewers were puzzled and doubtful—for they still seem to have supposed, in spite of its serialisation, that another *Little Minister* was due—there was no such hesitation on the part of readers. The standard price for novels had now dropped to six shillings—or four and sixpence for cash—but at this figure there was little menace from the libraries; and in the first fourteen months, again, *The Little Minister* was beaten by more than thirteen

thousand copies. Or, if you don't want to look back, *Sentimental Tommy*—in Great Britain and the Colonies—sold nearly thirty-seven thousand copies in all.

But even this wasn't as good as *Margaret Ogilvy*, which Hodder and Stoughton issued on December 5th, and which topped forty thousand copies almost at once. Turn back to America. Both books were published in November; *Sentimental Tommy* sold twenty-five thousand copies in the first year, and *Margaret Ogilvy* the best part of another ten thousand. Or add it all up, but still remember that this doesn't include the very profitable limited editions—one in each country—and that we are only dealing with approximately a season and a half, and we get something like a hundred and twelve thousand copies, with both books still going strong.

This isn't a record, even for one book, either then or now. A dozen authors were probably doing as well, and some of them considerably better, though there was no mass buying by clubs or societies in the nineties. Yet one doubts if five years had elapsed since their last volume, or if after this period they suddenly entered into competition with themselves. And *Sentimental Tommy* was so queer and unlike anything else that one still feels the odds were on a miss rather than a hit. While *Margaret Ogilvy* was ostensibly a short memoir of an unknown woman, which in the ordinary way you would hardly have expected to sell at all.

Only of course there was nothing of the ordinary way about either of them, and that was just it. The novel, which started with a touch of Gissing, darted off into old-fashioned melodrama, dropped back into autobiography, suddenly interpolated a slice of *Cranford*, and finally ended without an ending, was again constructionally outrageous. The memoir was entirely overshadowed by the author, whom—if you had read the novel first—you couldn't fail to confuse with Tommy Sandys. Yet there was the Something that filled both books to the brim, and even then overflowed. The quality. And the magic. Extraordinary Barrie, with his simple but extraordinary stock of goods.

He stood in his own corner of the market, for no one else was selling them; but there was a fine crowd there, and they would have taken a book a year now, gladly and eagerly, if only—well, what it comes to is if only he had been a real author. But he wasn't, or not in that sense. He had been a real journalist, though always with a difference, because it was that or nothing. Either he must write and

sell so many words a month, or else the game was up; and over the short course there was no question of not reaching some sort of an end. But just as Greenwood had once picked out suggested subjects, and Barrie had gone off and found he could only deliver something else, so now, with no one but himself to choose, he never knew what was going to happen next; and if Messrs. Cassell thought they were going to have the sequel to *Sentimental Tommy* for the following autumn, or even for the autumn after that, they were utterly mistaken. A great deal would have happened before they did get it, and a very queer sort of sequel it was going to be. Yet Destiny, one imagines, knew all about the play of *The Little Minister* by this time, and it wasn't going to let its favourite and victim starve.

There was another speech in December. Two years after his death a plan was afoot in Edinburgh to raise funds for a memorial to R.L.S. It may seem a long time to have waited, and a tablet at a street corner might seem a simple object to achieve, but as a matter of fact there was powerful local opposition. The students at the University and the more elderly intelligentsia were in favour of the scheme, but the bulk of the burgesses were suspicious and resentful, prejudiced against fiction, prejudiced against what they had heard of the hero's moral and religious outlook, and perhaps still more prejudiced against velvet jackets and long hair. The Memorial Committee seemed to have stirred up a hornets' nest, and the whole project might easily have been abandoned, if somebody hadn't been inspired to appeal to Lord Rosebery.

It was pretty courageous of him to give his support, for the snapping and snarling were now audible all over Scotland, and even snobbery and his great popularity could hardly protect him from a chorus of angry howls. But that didn't deter him. He not only came down on what was surely the right side, but undertook to say so at a public meeting and from the chair. So there was to be a great gathering in the Edinburgh Music Hall, the Committee began looking about for other speakers, and of course, by this time, it thought of Barrie.

It thought of Kipling, too, but it didn't get him. Indeed, the first part of the proceedings was occupied with letters of regret from almost every well-known literary figure of the day. But Barrie was there. And after Lord Rosebery had delivered a long oration, and

had been seconded, he rose to his feet. He began by asking permission to keep his hands in his trouser-pockets, and did so throughout the customary performance that followed. Perhaps even odder was a reference to Emily Brontë as the other best-loved author of the age. But he controlled an urgent impulse—for he was this kind of champion now—to castigate the obstructionists, and concluded by moving the appointment of a sub-committee with Professor Masson as Chairman.

Carried by acclamation. Vote of thanks by Sidney Colvin. Speech of further thanks by Lord Rosebery. And so back, with Mrs. Barrie, to his uncle's house for the rest of the week's visit. In due course the sub-committee would breed minor committees, money would be raised, a bronze relief by Augustus Saint-Gaudens would appear, not in the street, but in St. Giles's Church; the opposition would die down, and the *Scotsman's* acid suggestion that another thirty years would be soon enough to start talking about memorials would be forgotten long before the thirty years were up. But of course it wasn't only a posthumous triumph for Stevenson that day. It was J. M. Barrie's first public appearance in Edinburgh since his graduation. Fourteen years only, in this case, and a thousand students had roared when they heard his name. Very gratifying, in the words of Mr. Darling. Pleasure mustn't be shown, of course, for that was the absolute rule. But there was a glow, even in Edinburgh and on the 10th of December. Very decidedly, though no one must guess it, there was a glow.

Back to Gloucester Road for Christmas. Mrs. Barrie, who is going to be cleverer and cleverer at this as time goes on, wants to re-decorate the house, and does so—or, rather, has it done. Work, and rather weary work, on the play again. "Oh," writes the dramatist, "the re-reading of one's books. It is a grim ordeal."

1897. On January 18th the same character wrote what was perhaps the most inexplicable letter that ever came from his pen. To Mr. J. J. Carreras, of 7, Wardour Street, who seven years after the publication of *My Lady Nicotine* seems suddenly to have realised what one of his customers had been up to, and to have asked him if the rumour were correct. Here is the well-known acknowledgment, which is still printed on the pink labels of innumerable tins

"Dear Sir,

"In answer to your letter, it is your Craven Mixture—and no other that I call Arcadia in 'My Lady Nicotine.' I see no objection to your announcing this if you want to do so.

"Yours truly,

"J. M. Barrie."

That was clear enough, and true enough, but why on earth did he do it? Was this the man who hid or ran away from interviewers, and fell into a passion when his wife's portrait appeared in the *Woman at Home*? Well, of course it was, and of course he was inviting Mr. J. J. Carreras—or, rather, the gentleman now trading under his name—to do exactly what he did, even though neither of them may have guessed into what an enormous business that one little tobacconist's shop would grow. Was it gratitude? Sentiment? A sudden taste for the limelight after all? One just has to give it up, but one can't possibly pretend it never happened. Almost immediately the labels were altered, advertisements began appearing, and the surest way of receiving a thunderous glance from the author of the testimonial was to allude to Craven Mixture in any shape or form. Moreover, and apparently sickened by this abominable outbreak of publicity, he stopped smoking it. Indeed this is one of the queerest incidents of all.

February, and more R.L.S. Colvin, as a literary executor, wants somebody to finish *St. Ives*, which is now being serialised, and Barrie must again take a hand. He can't do it himself, and even knows he can't—though only four years ago he thought nothing of deputising for Gilbert. But perhaps that was a lesson, and there mustn't be another failure now. So Q shall do it, from Stevenson's notes, and Barrie will tell him anything about Scotland—where some scenes are to be laid—that he wants to know. What a task! But if anyone has ever blamed Q for that fantastic business of the balloon, then he is guiltless, for it was all in the original plan. As a matter of fact, he made a remarkably good job of winding up an admittedly second-rate bit of work; and it can't actually have been any easier when Barrie—in what Stevenson had called the "besotted ambiguity" of his handwriting—started sending him lists of Scotch words. No, the taskmasters must have had all the fun out of that business. But at least they realised that *Weir of Hermiston* could only be left as it stood.

April. The revised version of the play was as good as finished; its heroine was now one hundred per cent. what A. B. Walkley would call "roguey-poguey"—a part in which any actress capitalising this particular quality had only to look a little wistful at odd moments to be indeed a star; and the Barries were setting off on their new bicycles, too. By train, that is to say, to Stratford-on-Avon, and thence, mounted and pedalling, through fifteen miles of lovely, English orchards, to Broadway. "Oh, my ankles!" was the comment in a letter, for bicycles were higher and heavier in those days, there were no free-wheels, and even the best roads were dusty and bumpy. Furthermore, one generally expected to fall off once or twice, and while learning one hardly did anything else. But, oh, it was quiet and peaceful between the hedgerows, as you slowly overhauled a carrier's cart, or paused and drew breath while sheep or cattle took their own time to wander safely by. Man was still master of the machine—though those fixed pedals could deliver vicious blows—in the spring-time of 1897.

And here were the de Navarros, and the Millets, and Maud Valerie White, and the whole Broadway gang, in their old houses and big gardens. The bicyclists spent a week there, welcomed and made much of by all. And Madame de Navarro was still the most beautiful woman who had ever been on the stage. So Barrie must charm her—there was no difficulty about her charming him—and a new notion entered his mind. The cricket, this Diamond Jubilee season, should take its leave of Shere, and a challenge should be issued to Madame de Navarro herself. Not that she was a cricketer—indeed, it was said that she still believed the game was called "crickets"—but it was to be her team, and the Broadway artists were to rally under her banner; whether, as usual, they were more familiar with the rules and objects of the game or not. Thus it was ordered by Barrie, and thus it was arranged. Date, Saturday, June 18th, or only three days before the Diamond Jubilee itself. But Broadway was Broadway, whatever was happening elsewhere. And the Allahakbarries were far more interested in themselves than in crowds or processions.

Back, then, to Gloucester Road, to finish off the play, to collect the rest of the eleven, and—with Gilmour's advice and assistance—to turn some of that bank balance into more stocks and shares. It had been rising all the time, though still almost entirely from the books, and between five and six thousand pounds were again handed over



to the rock-like railways. Barrie is becoming a rich man, and no longer only by contrast with Grenville Street. Yet still this was but the beginning.

Frohman had been paying regular visits to Europe, and to London particularly, for a number of years now—arriving generally in April or thereabouts, and returning in July or August for the opening of his new American shows. This year, though still not the sole lessee (as they say in programmes), he was closely concerned with three London productions, and in his rooms at the Savoy Hotel he read scripts, summoned authors and actors, and continually laid his plans for more and more plays. Bright went to see him there, and Barrie may have met him again too, though still there was no more between them than watchfulness on both sides; and very considerable preoccupation—for there were to be six American productions this season—on the part of C.F. However, he read *The Little Minister* again, and it was all right this time. It was fine, in fact—to employ his favourite expression of approval—and Miss Adams should rise to stardom in it, after seven years under his management, as soon as he got back to the other side.

What about this side? No, he wasn't doubling the risk this time, and the play was still to be a vehicle for Miss Adams, first, foremost, and before everything else. So Bright, one may suppose, was offering or preparing to offer it to other stars or managers in London. But it was Barrie who actually spoke a few careless words, and placed it.

The scene was again the Garrick Club, and this time in the billiard-room on the top floor. He was playing with the actor who had appeared, six years ago now, as Steele in *Richard Savage*. But Cyril Maude had also risen very considerably in the theatrical world since then, and since last autumn had been running the Haymarket in conjunction and partnership with Frederick Harrison. A leading actor-manager, in fact—for the Haymarket has always had a name and a tradition—and with one success there already to his credit, in *Under the Red Robe*. So presently he asked Barrie what he was doing, and Barrie told him. No trouble this time, and hardly a moment's delay. Maude rushed back to Harrison, passed on the news, instilled his own enthusiasm, and of course they must have read the play rather sooner than later, but the trick was already done. Only terms to be arranged now, through Bright, and the Haymarket had chosen its autumn production too. Maude, who

wasn't so very little and had decided almost immediately that he wouldn't attempt to talk Scotch, was to be the Little Minister. Miss Winifred Emery, his extremely beautiful and attractive wife, was to be the Lady Babbie. The more they both read the play, the more they believed in it, and the more it was determined to put it on with every luxury and expense. Further enthusiasm, this time from Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who would write special Scottish music—rather wasted, one fears, on the author—and refused even to be paid for it. The public must still decide, of course, whether all these preparations should end in triumph or heart-rending disappointment. But the Barrie barometer seemed to be rising steadily enough this summer, and at the very worst there would again be weeks of rehearsals. On, meanwhile, though still rather slowly and uncertainly, with the next novel. And so, soon enough, to Saturday, June 18th.

Broadway in midsummer. Second-class return tickets from Paddington to Evesham, a brake to drive the Allahakbarries the remaining five and a half miles, and rooms booked for them—and again, of course, for their female supporters—at the Lygon Arms and elsewhere. Doyle was back in the team, Massingham, Gilmour, Bernard Partridge, E. T. Reed (his colleague on *Punch*), and John Davidson, the poet. Other names more doubtful, though perhaps some of them will be there again next year.

As for the Broadway artists, in this first of the Broadway matches, they certainly included Frank Millet, Alfred Parsons, and Herman G. Herkomer—who had married Madame de Navarro's sister. Edwin Abbey might have been among them. Also, but as artists in another sense, Kennerley Rumford and Plunket Greene. And positively, though they weren't artists at all, Tony de Navarro—who had been studying the rules in a book—and Charles Turley Smith. All friends, in any case, and the last—who steps in quietly like this, as he would very much prefer—a very special friend for another forty years. He wrote books about schoolboys—so that apart from residential qualifications, he ought really to have been on the other side—and Barrie loved them and used to give them to every schoolboy he knew. Perhaps, for a more modest author and everything else there has never been, he may dodge us, after this one appearance, even in these pages. But often enough, though presently he will leave Worcestershire for Cornwall, he will be somewhere just between the lines

There was another distinction between Broadway and 'Shere. The background of residents, in their lovely houses; and especially Court Farm, where on this Saturday evening the de Navarros entertained both teams to supper. Broadway had gained the victory by one run—a result which was no more surprising than many incidents in the match—and could crow if they liked, but neither of the two strange elevens was disgraced. So they all sat down together, and ate and drank. And smoked, of course. And made and listened to speeches. And afterwards they danced. Yes, Barrie danced, too, on this eve of the Diamond Jubilee, and again everybody was happy and childish, and again it was all his doing. He was thirty-seven now, which will seem old to some and young to others, and to just a few, perhaps, exactly the right age. At the top of his form, in any case, with friends of the best sort all round him, and the memory of joyful tomfoolery to take them all off to their beds. Again some of them wondered how on earth they had been persuaded to play such ridiculous games, and felt a little grown-up for a moment as they found themselves alone. And a little scared? They weren't quite sure. Yet it was odd, to say the very least, that a small Scotchman now getting on for forty, should want to make them behave like this, and should succeed, apparently, as easily as in everything else. Absurd, and again just a little alarming. But of course—it was the only explanation—Barrie was Barrie.

So the little old Queen and Empress came up by special train from Windsor; and crowds cheered her as she was drawn through the decorated streets, and Kipling wrote his *Recessional*, but still there was no sign that the nineties, with all their peaceful simplicities and splendours, were passing to a fatal end. In July the Barries went abroad again, once more to France and Switzerland, but were back by the beginning of September. Much talk now and many meetings with Cyril Maude over *The Little Minister*, final arrangements for casting it, and decisions on other details. One plan which had developed by now was to throw the original period back another twenty years; partly, perhaps, for the sake of the dresses, but also, it may have been, to clear the beginning of the reign. For sixty years ago, in 1897, could only mean one thing. So *The Little Minister* should now be eighty years ago, or actually twenty-two years before the real weavers' riots. Not that anyone was going to notice or care, for the play was by this time, if possible, even more of a fairy-story than the book.

Now, also, at the beginning of September, there were some moments of considerable suspense. Frohman, like Maude and Frederick Harrison, was putting heart and soul into his own production, mounting it lavishly, and engaging the strongest possible support. Yet for him it was still the vehicle which he had chosen for making Miss Adams a star, and to the last he was cabling suggestions for changes that might remove even a lingering public doubt. Her part was getting bigger and bigger, and she was being given more and more of the other characters' lines; but he was still rather worried that she wasn't in the title-rôle, and but for the value of the novel would almost certainly have altered the name of the play as well. Meanwhile, the most astonishing attempts were being made by the company to talk Scotch. "Don't worry," Frohman had told Barrie. "You wouldn't recognise it, but the American public will."

Monday, September 13th. Already it was the custom—Frohman's custom, in any case—for a New York production to be given a preliminary run elsewhere. And it was in Washington—the "paradise for bicyclists"—that *The Little Minister* was first played. A very hot night. The distinguished and friendly audience sweltered, seemed a little puzzled, and returned a verdict which was equally and alarmingly obscure. It was a failure? It was too Scotch? Miss Adams thought so, and business continued to drop. It almost looks as if Frohman must have thought so, too. Certainly he arranged to bring John Drew, in another opening, to his favourite and beloved Empire at the beginning of November.

It was *The Little Minister*, however, that got there first, and that was the end of the trouble. A triumphant, overwhelming reception for both play and star. John Drew came in, and it was transferred to the Garrick. Ran there for six months—to capacity, as they say, for all but eleven performances. Returned for one last, glorious evening, with a score of three hundred, to the Empire. Paused for a moment, and went out, still with Miss Adams, on a lengthy tour. Other tours went out. And still others, not quite so profitably, for theatrical pirates could still make their own versions of the novel, there were awkward gaps between the Federal laws, and according to Barrie (whom again we needn't entirely believe) during the first stampede no less than thirty-five unauthorised companies were robbing him of his rights at once.

Presently the stampede subsided, but the official tours went on,

for still it was the golden age in the vast territory of theatrical America. Still no cinema-houses, still no radio. You could set out with a play like this, and tour over the best part of three million square miles. A little more than ten years later Barrie told Lord Esher (who noted it in his Journal) that he had made eighty thousand pounds out of *The Little Minister* alone. Mostly in America, if he didn't say so. And Miss Adams and others were still reviving it for many years after that.

Of course the money side of it counts. Frohman's historic and productive infatuation sprang entirely from this first success. Soon enough, now, it would sweep over him, and Barrie would be in a position by himself among his very few close friends. But it was those box-office returns that started it. C.F. could never really have loved an author—spell or no spell—without at least one popular hit. Not that he minded losing money, though naturally he preferred making it. But all his life there was glamour for him in the big names. Even when—though this happened oftener with his stars than his authors—he had made them big himself.

And in the same way it was the riotous triumph of *The Little Minister* that made Barrie and Miss Adams such allies. Which if either of them really felt indebted to the other will probably never be known; for both had temperaments, and both had good grounds for taking more credit than they might openly admit. Yet here, with this staggering success to set it off, was the beginning of another close friendship—and of a most profitable association, too. Miss Adams became a private heroine, and another object of sentimental devotion. It was eighteen years after that performance of *Rosemary* before Barrie next saw her on the stage, though in the interval she had starred for him in America over and over again. But whenever she took a holiday on this side of the Atlantic, there he was to squire her, to flatter her, to employ his old and ingenious wiles again. Very possessive, and rather mysterious about it all to others—perhaps so as to heighten the romance. Always spoke of her as Miss Adams, even to those who knew her better than himself. But if you were to gather that she was royalty, you were also to gather that it was he who stood nearest the throne.

A pretty tremendous triangle—the great little Frohman, the great little Barrie, and the great little Maude Adams—as theatrical history continued to be made. But whatever came afterwards, or might have come afterwards anyhow, it was *The Little Minister* that pre-

pared the ground. A play, as you may remember, that the great little Barrie had once said could never be written at all.

The news from the Empire naturally brought fresh and special hopes to the Haymarket, where rehearsals had now begun. The author was back in his element. Prowling, smoking, or appearing suddenly in dark corners with a word of encouragement or advice. Or sometimes, though this was far from discouraging, either, with a joke that had nothing to do with the play at all. He always liked actresses, though particularly when they were good-looking; but these rehearsals were perhaps the only times when he really liked actors. They were astonished, there in the dusty darkness, by his sudden friendliness and by the confidences that he poured into their ears. So he was like this, was he, when you got to know him? Not the least shy, or difficult, or paralysing. Just a kind, good-natured little man. Quite true, at the moment; but of course they hadn't got to know him, and certainly shouldn't count on the same mood elsewhere. Thus the legend became confusing and contradictory, though it was all perfectly simple to J.M.B. If men were acting, they weren't really working; but if they were rehearsing, then for some reason they were. Yet he was loyal to them, so often, when fresh rehearsals were afoot. He liked having the old faces around him then, even if at first he didn't exactly seem to recognise them; and here, for instance, was Sydney Valentine, who would be in many another play by the same author before his course was run.

As for Miss Emery, it was the inevitable and familiar story all over again. More gallantry. More tributes to a beautiful woman who was an actress as well. The author, in fact, had already set himself to flirt with her outrageously, in his own peculiar way; which is to say that the seriousness of his feelings was the one thing that he couldn't possibly have explained. But he couldn't stop himself, either. He just had to see how well he could do it; "for most conspicuous of his traits," as he had written of his Tommy, "was the faculty of stepping into other people's shoes and remaining there until he became someone else." So now, once more, he became the very sentimental admirer of a leading lady. And she and her husband both smiled, for of course they were fond of him, and took it with great patience and kindness. Though again it may well be that it wasn't such very conspicuous fun for one character who must look on.

Another incident at these Haymarket rehearsals. The stage

carpenter had built a kind of little platform over the orchestra-pit, with a wooden rail on three sides of it, and here Barrie and Maude sat together while the company spoke their lines. Particularly convenient, of course, for an actor-manager, for he could see the whole picture, and then, when his own turn came, need only step forward on to the stage. He noticed, in this instance, one day quite early in October, that the author was tilting his chair. He had done it before—in fact, he was always doing it—but this time he suddenly did it too much. There was a splintering sound as the rail gave way, a loud crash, and both Barrie and the chair had gone.

Something like panic, for anyone who had fallen six or eight feet and was now lying unconscious must obviously be dead. There was a rush to pick him up, he was carried into Maude's office, and there, to everyone's immense relief, he opened his eyes. They raced him to Charing Cross Hospital in a cab, but—to everyone's astonishment this time—he was only cut and badly bruised. He was bandaged, sent off in another cab to Gloucester Road—where Mrs. Barrie was already in bed with a bad cold—and there for some days two patients lay on their backs. One at least of them very much annoyed by reports which had appeared in the newspapers, and still telling all inquirers that it was a mere scratch.

But he was rehearsing again by the middle of the month, and for three more weeks after that. Less hurry in those days. The theatre could still afford to take its time. It still had dignity, as well as absurdity, and at the Haymarket everything must be finished and polished to the last possible degree. Any change elsewhere? Not much since we last looked round, six years ago. Tree had built Her Majesty's. Burlesque was dead, and Musical Comedy reigned in its stead. At the Palace the programme now ended with the New American Biograph. But most of the other theatres had much the same names in them, and very much the same plays. Still there was stability as well as leisure.

And so to November 6th, and another triumph—as we all know—for *The Little Minister*. "Refreshes and enlivens," said *The Times*, though still not Walkley, and the audience and every other critic agreed. Barrie had brought off the double event, and Maude and Harrison had the biggest success of their nine years' partnership. The play ran straight through until the third week in the following July, and was resumed, after the summer recess, for the best part of a further two months. Nearly eleven months in all,

with crowded houses the whole time, and, as the saying goes, cheers, tears, and laughter. And then came the tours. That was certainly a very lucky game of billiards on the top floor of the Garrick Club.

It was the picturesque setting that helped, no doubt. The new, strange use of psalm-singing and religious pride and prejudice as background to a light comedy. The gay heroine, with her teasing moods, and the blackcoated, clerical hero, so blind to all the tricks that were played on him, but with the audience always on his side. No doubt, again, there was a steady supply of novel-readers, who wanted to see—though they certainly saw nothing of the sort—what *Thrums* was like in three dimensions. But the charm was there. And the story, however improbable or impossible, was always on the move. No long speeches in the dialogue now. It tripped and darted from beginning to end.

Was it a good play, though? It sounds rather impertinent, and particularly after this record of international standing-room only, to suggest that it wasn't; and one should be pretty careful before arguing with any box-office. Yet when Barrie was putting his plays together for the collected edition of 1928, he didn't choose to include it. He knew, he must have known, that of all his writings for the stage, it was the one in which he had been most hampered and least at liberty to go his own way. Bright had begun it, Frohman had knocked it about; the early view of the Auld Licht legends had gone further and further out of sight. It was a manufactured article, and much of it painfully manufactured at that. Painfully and crudely. When he looked back at it he saw this, and no one with the later plays before him could possibly have seen anything else.

But that doesn't alter its history. In its day, which was a long one, millions of contented playgoers quite clearly detected its beauty, its humour, and its romance. It brought Barrie into contact with a manager who would presently stage virtually anything that he chose to write; and it freed him from all necessity to write in any other manner for the rest of his life. It more than served its purpose, not only in granting him this release, but in teaching him, while he earned it, a great deal more about his job. Besides, we all need success; it's so good for us, even when it's bad for us at the same time. Or even when, by some astonishing and improbable chance, we happen to be J.M.B.

What next? Bright wanted more plays, of course, and had evidence that both managers and the public wanted them too. But



Barrie had nothing ready, and nothing on the stocks. Fragmentary ideas in plenty, beginnings, middles, and even a few ends. One, in particular, had been noted just two years ago. "187. *Play. Scotch Wedding*—The other woman steals in while it is in progress." By "Scotch Wedding," he meant, in this instance, a wedding held, like his own, in a private house. The idea had grown since then, and the "other woman" had been linked to the mild but continuous obsession with "P.L.," or the Painted Lady, and that recurrent "illegitimate child." But there was nothing like a plot yet. Only detached visions in the pipe-smoke. So Bright or anyone else who was interested must wait. Back to the novel, for which the patient Charles Scribner—who had again undertaken to serialise it—was waiting, too.

With interruptions, of course. Now and again something would still go forward with a rush, and a scene or chapter would seem almost to write itself. But then there would be a hitch or distraction, and again the pen turned aside. Producing a snatch of dialogue which might be for a play or story, and might or might not be heard of again, but had nothing to do with *Tommy and Grizel*. It wasn't so much that it was undisciplined, for it was being watched and in a sense controlled all the time; but it was so extraordinarily and insistently responsive to thoughts which most of us have lost before we can even step on their passing shadow. Strange processes at work in that little study over the front door.

Now it was December again, and Christmas in Gloucester Road. Early this year, or perhaps even earlier than that, Mrs. Barrie had met one of Sir George Lewis's daughters at a friend's house, and soon they were drawn together by a new friendship too. When, for instance, there was a "copyright performance" of *The Little Minister* at the Haymarket—still necessary in those days to protect the acting rights—this girl and her younger sister had each read a part. So had the Barries. So, if it comes to that, had Richard Harding Davis, the American novelist and playwright, who was another friend. They had all found it rather fun.

By now, also, the Barries had dined more than once with Sir George and Lady Lewis at their house in Portland Place, and here—this is back in December—they had been bidden to the annual party which was held on New Year's Eve. Many will still remember those hospitable occasions, and indeed they were worth remembering; for the host and hostess must have known nearly everyone of

interest or distinction, and in those days, again, there was no general exodus from London at this time of year. Artists, actors and actresses, writers, musicians, lawyers, politicians, not to mention a number of guests whom the Lewises welcomed and appreciated just as much as the more famous, were all delighted to accept these invitations, and to enter that happy and amusing and extremely intelligent home. Number 88, Portland Place. They've pulled it down now, of course; there's a block of flats where it stood. But for many more years its beautiful pictures would look down on such gatherings, while the host twinkled and the hostess smiled and laughed. In her own way, for she was a native of Mannheim, she was often quite as difficult to understand as Barrie himself, and when they were talking to each other a listener might well wonder if they were actually speaking the same language at all. But they were, and here also was a friendship that grew and never failed. For indeed Lady Lewis was kind, even when she was firm, and Barrie will be sitting at her table and telling her pretty nearly everything for another twenty-three and a half years.

To-night, though, there are six tables to fill the dining-room, and twelve guests at each. This is the custom. Seventy-two to dinner, and more still when the theatres have finished and the actors and actresses arrive. Later, in the back drawing-room upstairs, there will be a home-made entertainment, written and rehearsed by some of these same friends. Supper and a toast to the new year at midnight. And presently the coachmen and cab-drivers will end their own vigil, and another of these very special and now legendary parties will disperse. There won't be anything about it in the newspapers to-morrow, any more than there will be cigarette-ends all over the floors. For this, though it has nearly ended, is still 1897—as there are so many reasons for wishing that it could always have remained.

At the moment, indeed, the guests are still dining, and most of the evening is yet to come. Barrie turns to one of his neighbours. And from now on she must just content herself with a view of his little back. For there, just beyond him, is possibly the most beautiful woman in the room. Sylvia Llewelyn Davies, who five years ago was Sylvia du Maurier. Neither of them will ever forget this meeting, for what is to come of it will be rather more than special and legendary, too.

## 16

The du Mauriers have their own chronicler now, and no one could be more gifted at placing them, so far as this can ever be done, between the covers of a book. Clever Daphne, we salute you—and Barrie saluted you, too—for the visions which you have revived of charm and sadness, and of lives in which variants of the same strong family characteristics all, in Sylvia's generation, ended in doom. Yet in 1898, where we now find ourselves, there was still plenty of gaiety for George du Maurier's five children—even though their fascinating and beloved father had died (while the Barries were in America) some fifteen months ago. As a friend of Edwin Abbey and Alfred Parsons it seems likely if not certain that he must at least have encountered J.M.B. as well. And indeed it was no curious or far-fetched chance which brought about that meeting with the second of his three daughters at the Lewises' party; for if it hadn't happened there, it would have been bound to happen sooner or later, when already there were so many points where the two circles overlapped.

She was thirty-one now, and had been married—as was said—for rather more than five years. In other words, she hadn't been a particularly young bride, but then there had been a long engagement, for Arthur Llewelyn Davies was only a struggling barrister, and Mrs. du Maurier, for some reason, had been very much opposed to it. Well, the fact was that she didn't much like him, though as he was tall and good-looking he obviously had two of the qualities which for the rest of the family were of extreme importance. They also demanded good manners, which they were quite willing and more than able to supply themselves—that is to say, when a fit of intolerance didn't get in the way. But then Arthur Davies was also distinctly intolerant, so there in a sense you were, and perhaps that was partly why he and his mother-in-law never really saw eye to eye.

But he and Sylvia adored each other, before they were married, after they were married, and for as long as they were allowed to live. And Sylvia was adored by everyone; first, no doubt—since it was the first thing that everyone noticed—for her looks, and then, as they got to know her better, for so much that was there as well.

She could be mischievous, which was another family characteristic, and nothing human, as one might say, was outside her interest and sense of fun. Certainly no languishing beauty, but high-spirited and amusing and even fond of stories—again like the other du Mauriers—which weren't supposed to be feminine in those days. Quick and clever, and with inherited good taste. But chiefly, perhaps—if one can forget those looks for a moment—someone who was real, free from all nonsense, and frank in her essential attitude towards life.

However, last as well as first, it was the looks that were remembered, and with very good reason, for there has been nothing like them since. She was a little taller and larger than the average, as though her father had drawn her—which, of course, more literally, he had done again and again—with movements that were sometimes even on the verge of being clumsy; and then weren't, because she was Sylvia Davies, and the word just wouldn't fit. Her nose was what is known as tip-tilted. Her mouth was firm and resolute, until suddenly there was a provoking and enchanting lift on one side. Her wide-spaced, grey eyes— But that's the difficulty, and that is where all words must begin to fail. For human, happy Sylvia, a wife and mother who seemed so richly blessed, looked out at you with the most heart-rending and heart-piercing expression that you had ever seen. You knew—or you knew in those days—that this arrangement of her features was only an accident, that as yet it represented no inner tragedy or tragic philosophy, for wasn't she making another part of you laugh at the same time? She was, indeed; and yet you were haunted. Such pathos, such poignancy—all in due time, Heaven knows, to be written there in genuine, dreadful suffering—but at this moment spiritualised, as it seemed, or made unearthly to a point that you could hardly stand. Does this sound like beauty? But it was, and other artists tumbled over each other to try and draw it, though perhaps not one of them could succeed—any more than we can—in reproducing what they thought they saw. So many subtleties; though perhaps more than half of them in the eye of the beholder. So many reasons, as their pencils toiled at this baffling task, why she shouldn't be beautiful at all. Yet that's what she was, and it didn't take a draughtsman to see it. In one flash you knew it, and here at any rate was the one and only word that would do.

At this time the Davieses were living in Kensington Park Gardens, to the north or north-west of Notting Hill, and already

they had three little sons. George, born in the summer of 1893, Jack, who was fourteen months younger, and Peter, who was still not quite one. So it was George, aged four and a half, and Jack, only a little over three, who took their daily walks in the neighbourhood of the Round Pond, while Peter must make the whole expedition in his perambulator. Very good-looking little boys, of course, and rather unusually dressed, for the year in question, in a fashion which their mother had designed and devised. At the moment—for this is still winter—you mightn't have seen their little embroidered, square-necked blouses (which a costumier would presently be copying for some of the children in *Peter Pan*), but you would certainly have noticed the rare sight of their red berets; though you mightn't have guessed that Mrs. Davies had made them from her grandfather-in-law's judicial robes. Rather fierce little boys, those two elder ones, notwithstanding their clothes; for Arthur Davies was determined that they should be manly, they were just as determined as he was, and it was their pride and principle never to accept a kiss. No, one wouldn't like to say positively that when kind old ladies bent over them, as was even more the custom in those days, they were actually hit in the face. But such overtures were certainly received with scowls and clenched fists, for George and Jack set off on their pilgrimage with a full share of intolerance, too.

Of course, if you liked them—which is easy enough with any du Maurier—the next thing was that you became rather conceited when you pierced their defences at all. Besides, they weren't really demons—not even with that constant encouragement to be manly—but rather particularly nice little boys. Has Barrie met them yet? He has certainly heard about them, from their mother, and at the first sound of them motherhood has again struck him as the most wonderful thing in the world. And he and the two elder little Davieses might well have noticed each other in the Gardens already, or at least have separately become aware of some red berets and an enormous, brown-and-white St. Bernard.

Some time this winter or spring, in any case, George and Jack must have realised that, associated with the enormous dog, there was a man—sometimes a woman, too—who stopped and spoke to them on their walks. And that the man had a voice unlike any other voice, though they would soon learn to interpret it and hardly think it strange at all. That he also had the gift of raising one

eyebrow and simultaneously lowering the other. That his dog did tricks. That he—the man, that is to say, with the eyebrows—would pick up some toy that they had brought with them; a hoop, it might be, or a ball; and not only exhibit unusual skill with it, for an adult, but devise some new and entertaining way of playing with it which nobody, in their experience, had ever thought of before. To George, also, rising five, the man—who would presently be identified as Mr. Barrie—was already telling stories; which Jack wasn't quite sure that he followed, and Peter, of course, failed to appreciate at all. If one eavesdropped one would recognise some of the incidents at first, for at first they came from the common nursery store. Then they turned more and more to imaginary adventures; and then to adventures in which it seemed that George and Jack, and even Peter, had taken part. They drifted—not yet, perhaps, but there was plenty of time still—into long, indeed almost interminable serials in which the boys were always the heroes, and the narrator, for some reason, was apt to play a rather craven and undignified rôle. They rescued him, and they rescued some of his grown-up friends, who, so it appeared, were rather helpless and unreliable too. The little boys listened, prompted, corrected, took it all seriously—until each, in turn, lost his first innocence and unquestioning belief—and dwelt happily in two worlds at the same time. Magic was added to Kensington Gardens, and they accepted it without gratitude but with something that for their ingenious companion was even more of a reward. For never had he had such an audience, and never had he worked harder to supply it with fresh material day after day.

Back, no doubt, in his own mind to Dumfries, from which so much could still be garnered and served up anew. A good deal of plagiarism from other authors, though all twisted to fit the present company and cast. Porthos, of course, was another hero. And Mrs. Barrie, though there were very few girls in the stories, was sometimes a heroine, too. Then, as the days grew longer and warmer, there were the beginnings of cricket, with a tree-trunk in the place of stumps, and a left-handed bowler tirelessly fielding and coaching, until presently it was time for more stories again. And then the fortunate little Davieses must go back to Notting Hill, while their playmate turns south again towards Gloucester Road. Under the spell? Of course they were, though they were too young to know it, or to realise as yet that there wasn't someone like Mr. Barrie in every child's life.

And he, too, with all these fancies, idealised and stimulated their manliness. As each grew older—and presently there would be two more little Davieses to go through the same course of instruction—he sorrowed slightly, but did nothing to hold them back. It was even, simultaneously, a kind of pleasure to him when the first look of scepticism appeared in their eyes. It hurt, but it was the right thing to happen. For in his secret mind, by that time, they were already his adopted sons.

Not yet. And not yet, either, had the name of Peter been taken for an invisible playmate, who would soon be almost as real as the three, or the four, or the five. But friendship wasn't only growing in the Gardens. The Barries and the Llewelyn Davies parents were seeing more and more of each other, too. No one was exactly out of it yet, and there was no real reason why they should be. It was Barrie, no doubt, who did most to keep it going, but Mrs. Barrie knew all about his enthusiasms, and Sylvia was irresistible to her as well. Here, it seemed, was a friend for her, also, and the quick, clever wife with money fell swiftly under the decorative influence of the quick, clever wife whose husband was still toiling to make his own fortune and name. Everyone began to know of the association, to begin speaking of the Barries and the Davieses, but naturally and easily enough, in the same breath. Only Arthur, perhaps, was a little obstructive and reluctant, as he felt something slipping from his grasp. Not his wife's love, for we've been into that already, and she never loved anyone else. But he was a struggling barrister, with so fierce a feeling of independence that he couldn't even play up to a leading solicitor unless he liked his accent and face. It was *his* family at 31, Kensington Park Gardens, he was the head of it, and when the front door was shut there, nobody else must have anything to do with it at all.

Yet there, on the other side of the Park, was an extraordinary little author, who had earned (though of course he didn't know the figures) well over eight thousand pounds last year and was in process of earning twelve thousand pounds in this, who quite obviously cherished a kind of adolescent passion for the mother of his children, and seemed to be in and out of their nursery a great deal oftener than an ordinary, even if devoted, father could altogether understand. He didn't honestly much care about it. It wasn't what he had bargained for. He quite liked the little author, though he didn't sometimes seem to have very much in common with him,

and he was quite fond of the little author's wife, too. And rather sorry for her. But the whole business was something that he never would have chosen, or else that he ought to have chosen for himself. And every time the difference in their respective incomes cropped up—as it is bound to do, whether they are mentioned or not, in any community where there are incomes at all—Arthur Davies felt stubborn and as though he would very much like something to stop.

But the little man was so kind, and so generous, and often enough so thoughtful. And half London was in love with Sylvia, anyhow, if it came to that. Besides, she was always laughing at him. There wasn't the least chance of his homage ever turning her head. Let it go, then. Perhaps it was amusing in a way, and anyhow it was unlikely to last. For no one, in such a risky profession as authorship, could expect to be lucky for ever; whereas an ambitious, hard-working barrister, with his heart in his calling, might rise to any heights. When that happened, and the tables were turned, it would be a very different and much more normal state of affairs. So Arthur Davies went down to the Temple, and continued—in spite of his attitude to certain solicitors—to show how hard-working and ambitious he was. Not knowing, poor Arthur Davies, that in less than another nine years he would be looking, and looking desperately and gratefully, to J. M. Barrie as the one hope and safeguard that was left.

Meanwhile, there had been another sign of success for the author. In March he had gone up to St. Andrews and been capped with an honorary LL.D. More cheers from more students; and for anything, as we all know, but the last time. So back to Gloucester Road again, and we know now what was happening there. *Tommy and Grizel* was still taking its time, still showing a remarkable unwillingness to obey orders, and still a long way from any kind of end. The old fight was going on between a plot and almost unwanted inspiration, but in the revision which constantly accompanied each step forward it was quite clear that something was altering Grizel. In *Sentimental Tommy* she had rocked her arms. But now she had a crooked smile as well.

There she is, in Chapter IV, and no woman's appearance in any story had been described as closely as this. In *Sentimental Tommy*, moreover, though there is some use of a confidential "we," the author is doing his best to remain behind the scenes. But in *Tommy*



and *Grizel* it is "I" from beginning to end, and if "I" isn't Barrie, who is he? It's true that, like the old dominie in *The Little Minister*, he gives long scenes and conversations at which he couldn't possibly have been present; but when it comes to that special paragraph in Chapter IV, this is Barrie, and no one else, writing about Sylvia Llewelyn Davies and nobody else on earth.

So read it, if you want to know how he saw her. Or here, in the summer or autumn of '98, is a pencilled entry from the current notebook—for the two-year gap is over now—which shows, among many others, what was happening to the story and its heroine in his mind.

"94. *Revise*. G's nose tip-tilted (really more as if point cut off). She is square-shouldered—woman who will look glorious as a mother (so I think of her *now*, always so). A woman to confide in (no sex in this, we feel it in man or woman). All secrets of womanhood you felt behind those calm eyes & courage to face them. A woman to lean on in trouble."

No sex! Was this what he still thought he wanted? Or had anyone else seen Sylvia Davies like that? Let it pass. For this is all something that is still only beginning, in the earlier part of 1898. The next historical fact, at the end of April, was a visit from George W. Cable.

It was Barrie's idea more than his that he should come over to England and give readings from his novels, and with no Major Pond in charge of the arrangements it was Barrie, of all people, who tried to take his place. So here was Cable, staying at Gloucester Road, and in May, when the first reading was to be held (with Birrell in the chair), Hodder and Stoughton were to issue an English edition of his eighteen-year-old story, *The Grandissimes*, with an introduction by his host. For the host was as determined as ever that his admiration should be shared, and that English readers should have every opportunity of taking the Creoles to their hearts. So Hodder and Stoughton were roped in, and Nicoll must have another reading at his house in Hampstead. And the Lewises must have a reading at Portland Place, which they did, with Sir Henry Irving (as he had now become) to preside. And other friends, in London and elsewhere, must collaborate, and all should be for the glory of Cable and the pride and satisfaction of J.M.B.

Much of which was brought to pass. Cable read and also lectured all over the place, his novel was published, and boomed in the *British Weekly*, and everyone whom Barrie could influence or get hold of was urged to rally round. At first, too, Cable at 133, Gloucester Road was an enormous success, with Barrie showing him the sights of London—for this was his first visit—and gloating appreciatively over all his questions and his habit of taking down the answers in a little book. And friends did rally, here—but Porthos had to be removed, for he had a violent prejudice against one person doing all the talking—and to Nicoll's, and to the Lewises'; and they were all polite, though as a matter of fact they found some difficulty in following the Creole dialect, were embarrassed by some of the Creole crooning, and distinctly puzzled by the performer's white cotton gloves. Something perhaps had led them to expect another Bret Harte or Mark Twain, and one is afraid, for everyone's sake, that they were a little bewildered and disappointed.

Meanwhile, and whether he had brought his violin with him or not, it seemed that Cable was pining to play chess. So Barrie played chess with him. And went on playing chess with him. And remembered all the hospitality at Northampton, Massachusetts, and set his teeth and played chess again. Five long weeks it lasted, until Cable set forth on a provincial tour, and somehow by the time they were over it wasn't only chess that had slightly lost its charm. The host had been so kind, and had taken so much trouble, and no one could have wanted the whole business to be more of a success. But you remember, possibly, the Continental expedition with Joseph Thomson, and here was the same thing, in a way, over again. Too much undiluted Cable, or too much undiluted anyone, invariably strained at his patience and nerves. Not, of course, that he was the first or last inhabitant of these islands to discover that American hospitality simply can't be returned. But there can be no doubt that he felt much more friendly to Cable and his works again when the visit had come to an end.

He wrote another introduction this summer, to a posthumous volume of stories by Mrs. Oliphant, with whom there had been an exchange of compliments and admiration for a number of years. And there was a little duologue, *A Platonic Friendship*, for Cyril Maude and Miss Emery, which they played at a charity matinée. But that concludes the visible output for 1898. *Tommy and Grizel* was still very much behindhand, and still taking nearly all his time.

Frohman was certainly over in London this summer, buying plays and transacting other business, and by this time also he had taken a long lease of the Duke of York's Theatre, where in the autumn—his first production without an associate English manager—he would present *The Adventure of Lady Ursula*, by Anthony Hope. Perhaps he saw Barrie. Perhaps he only saw Bright. Or perhaps when he saw Bright and heard that Barrie had no new play for him, he didn't want to waste his own time. Authors, and even this author, were still only of use to him when they were his friends already or had something to sell. So for another season this part of the story remains in suspense.

Here was June on its way, though, and whatever American impresarios were up to, of course the Allahakbarries must gather and turn out again. Madame de Navarro was invited to issue a challenge and obligingly did so. Would Saturday, June 11th suit her? It would, and in the intervals of chess-playing the rival captain set about collecting his team. Gilmour first, of course; always the foundation-stone. And then Doyle, who would bring his brother-in-law, E. W. Hornung—at this very moment engaged in writing *Raffles*. Bernard Partridge, E. T. Reed, and Henry Ford. *Punch*, which he had joined last year, also supplied Owen Seaman. Sidney Pawling, William Heinemann's partner, represented another side of literature. And there were two new Allahakbarries who were also on the point of becoming the captain and selector's very intimate friends. Will Meredith, George Meredith's younger son, and A. E. W. Mason.

For it was in this year that Will Meredith, who had previously been in an engineering works in Wales, joined the London publishing firm of Messrs. Archibald Constable; and that Barrie still paying those frequent visits to Flint Cottage, had picked up with him again. There he was, then—with his wife as well—in the brake that drove from Evesham to Broadway. And this year, for the whole thing was getting a little more elaborate, on the Friday.

As for good-looking A. E. W. Mason, with the loud laugh that was variously characterised as intoxicating and insane, he might easily have turned up a great deal earlier, for he had been a friend of Q's at Oxford, and it was a joint climbing holiday which had led, three years ago, to his first book. But somehow he had never met Barrie—perhaps because in the *Speaker* days, while Q was still a Londoner, Mason had been acting with F. R. Benson and wasn't

a literary man at all. In '96, however, he had published his second novel, *The Courtship of Morrice Buckler*, and though Barrie seems to have been a bit slow at getting on to it, he was full of admiration when he did. The next thing, of course, was to write to the author and ask him to play cricket. So there was Mason in the brake as well.

Two big supper-parties this year, each with more songs, speeches, and dancing. On the Friday afternoon there were some sports "of an undignified character" at Court Farm, and Barrie and Mason won the three-legged race. On the Saturday the Allahakbarries avenged their narrow defeat in the Diamond Jubilee match with a victory by six wickets. Doyle (top score), 46 not out. Seaman and Barrie (next highest), 5 and 4 respectively. It was also one of Barrie's great days as a bowler, for he took seven Broadway wickets with a new leg break which astounded him, he admitted afterwards, even more than the batsmen. All the same kindness and hospitality from the diarchs at Court Farm and Russell House. And then, on the Sunday, a slow train back to London; and no more cricket now until next year.

At the end of the month the Barries went north for their summer holiday, though it was a holiday in which the condition of *Tommy and Grizel* still necessitated a great deal of work, to a house which they had taken near Grandtully, on the Tay. Barrie did some simple fishing in little burns, while Porthos watched him or, as a sport of his own, encouraged rabbits to run away from him by pushing them gently forward with his nose. But never caught them, and wouldn't have hurt them if he had. For Porthos was always the gentlest of gentlemen, though he had one habit that was perhaps less courteous than it seemed. He didn't much care for visitors, and had a notion that if he continued to shake hands with them they would go. They were flattered and delighted. "Your dog seems to like me," they would say, and Porthos lay down again, gazing at them mournfully and nobly from his tragic, reproachful eyes. Poor Porthos, already showing signs of increasing delicacy, and now more than half-way through his short though favoured life.

There were visitors this summer, one fears; friends, relations, and Allahakbarries. And in August, when the run of *The Little Minister* at the Haymarket was suspended, up came the Maudes and their two little girls. Maude was a real fisherman. No little burns for him, with the Tay almost at the door. Off he went, day

after day, while the host told his daughters fairy-stories in the garden, and once, on his return, made this extremely characteristic little note.

"11. Actor fishing all day & never catching anything—surprising till you realise he is playing the part of a fisherman."

Very naughty. Most ungrateful. And absolutely untrue. But even actors, it would seem, who were making your fortune must still be treated to these impish thoughts and cntries behind their backs.

During this same visit—and while the note-book, when it isn't just darting from one glimpse of an idea to another, is mainly occupied with a proposed comedy about a Duke and a lady's maid—Barrie and Maude took their bicycles and went over to Kirriemuir. Maude's first sight of it, except on the stage. Barrie's first visit for nearly three years. Strath View was still shut up, or at any rate there were no relations there, and the bicyclists stayed with the Lyells at Kinnordy, a mile from the centre of the little town. Again a secret and satisfying sense of contrast, for one of them, between sleeping in this big house and peering, as the little boy who was still inside him, through its lodge gates.

Later, when the guests had gone and the two-months' lease of Beechwood, the Strathtay house, was up, the Barries took another little tour in Scotland by themselves. By the beginning of October they were back in Gloucester Road, and the first draft of *Tommy and Grizel* was finished, though many months of revision lay ahead—with the heroine still changing all the time. The note-book runs more and more to ideas for plays again, and the heading "article," or "novel," or "story" now hardly appears at all. Here, however, are two comments on contemporary authors to show what else was flitting through his mind.

"55. The Kipling-Henley school, each trying who can say 'damn' loudest.

"56. Henley and G. Moore fighting as to whether Turgeneff or Tolstoi cd hang the other on his watch-chain."

There is a note, also, this autumn about the wreck of a fishing-boat, witnessed while on a visit to Folkestone. And this, immedi-

ately following it, to suggest that in one respect, at any rate, the nineties weren't altogether different from to-day.

"59. *Hotels*. The *literature*—Commerce, Licensed Victuallers' Gazette, Textile Review, &c.—fine revolving book-cases with nothing in them."

A hint, a few pages later—the first legible hint that can be identified—of a play for and about children. Something to do with Santa Claus and Christmas (which must have been here by now), and a glimpse of the little Davieses, though their names aren't mentioned, in their nightgowns. And then again, for now this is the real task which will run concurrently with the revision, the title of what at first looks like yet another new play. "The Two Kinds of Women." It isn't a new one, though; it's the old idea—at least four years old by this time—of the Scotch wedding. But at last it is falling into scenes and acts, and the characters are finding their names. This will be going on through all the early months of 1899, and we shall be meeting it again.

Now, also, at the beginning of this year or the end of '98, a new friendship sets off. Enter Maurice Hewlett—a year younger than Barrie, who is now thirty-eight—and soon enough his wife, and their two children, all of whom are to come into the circle as well. Hewlett, who took such pains to look like Mephistopheles—except that Mephistopheles isn't generally understood to wear sandals—was actually one of the kindest creatures that there has ever been. In speech, perhaps, just a little Mephistophelian too; but that was the surface, and the better you got to know him, the more you realised the warmth and sweetness in the depths. He was still a Civil Servant at this time, but *The Forest Lovers*, which had just been published, had at last set the door ajar. It was this same book, undoubtedly, that had roused Barrie's interest and admiration; so that presently Hewlett must be dragged on to the cricket-field, too. Meanwhile, he has already entered the circle, and there will be many evenings, for a long while yet, at his house in Northwick Terrace or at 133, Gloucester Road.

The Hewletts, the Llewelyn Davieses, the Will Merediths, and A. E. W. Mason; these were now the closer companions, for all were now Londoners, too. Plenty of friendly correspondence, though, and less frequent but friendly meetings with many others. Week-end visits here and there. Still a steady supply of cheques

from Bright, as *The Little Minister* toured at home and abroad, and enough invested by this time to bring in a handsome and unfailing income by itself. It all seemed not only prosperous but happy. As it ought to have been. Or might have been. But it wasn't; for if a woman sees her husband spending quite so much time and thought on another woman's little boys, how can she help having secret thoughts of her own? Or if she tries to put them aside, knowing so well what he is like by now, there will always be looks of sympathy or, worse still, of pity from others. And then, with children as with everything else, it's the not having what you might have had that gnaws and unsettles and won't leave you alone.

One knows how closely Barrie watched himself, but always there were the bits that he couldn't or wouldn't see. Or couldn't and wouldn't believe. No one more deliberately blind and callous, even though no one more sensitive and observant, than this little figure who was always on both sides of the footlights at once.

Signs, on the other hand, of the old feeling for his old family in a visit, early this year, from Alick Barrie's two sons—now getting on for seventeen and eighteen. Both shortly to follow their uncle as students at Edinburgh, to which district their father was about to be transferred. Charlie, the elder boy, was already thinking of literature, or at least of journalism, as a possible profession. His uncle looked back, and looked forward; saw what might have been done for himself, and what, later on, might be done for Charlie. Meanwhile, kindness, good advice, and tips, and both nephews returned to Scotland.

The last lap of *Tommy and Grizel*, of which, in March, he writes: "I can see the finish not so far off, but it cracked somewhere about the middle and needs a deal of sticking-plaster yet." The new play, however, was going forward with less difficulty. It was still called "The Two Kinds of Women"—a purist might have suggested "Woman" here—and was still described as a comedy, though it was some way from being that. Its story, briefly, was of a Scotch girl's marriage to a Chelsea artist, whose mistress, though he doesn't know this, has had a child. She comes to Scotland, with the intention of interrupting the wedding, but faints instead, at the end of Act I, and thus leaves three more scenes for discoveries, complications, and a final adjustment and renunciation which might have proved less of a solution in real life. It doesn't, you may agree,

sound very much like Barrie. Here, one feels when one reads it, is an author—despite the gay impudence of *Walker, London* and *The Professor's Love Story*—who has seen other plays about triangles, and thinks he can do it too. There are some laughs in it, though not very many, but for the most part he is deadly serious; as if determined now to prove that he is grown-up, and even a man of the world. His text was tolerance, and forgiveness, and the power of goodness in a good woman over all the evil that can touch her life. He was showing the good that she can bring out of a technically bad woman, too. He was attacking the selfishness—though in this case it often seems more like the extreme feeble-mindedness—of ravening and ungrateful man. Moreover, in 1899 he was being pretty daring with his lawless Mrs. Ommaney and the actual stage appearance, even in the form of a small doll, of her illegitimate child. Strong stuff this, if some of the situations can be swallowed; or again if either treatment or dialogue could have come from a blunter pen. For the real Barrie, who was of course in the background throughout, isn't only much too kind, but far too remote in his own experience from what he is trying to describe. In fact, it isn't only the baby who is a puppet in this play.

Yet the scenes were certainly theatrical. There could be no comparison with the author in any subsequent phase. While ever since *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*—though that was six years ago now—London managements had been obsessed with the fascination and money-making possibilities of a woman with a past.

So George Alexander read the script—typewritten now, as times change and invention advances—and was very much impressed. Here, he thought, was meat. He told Miss Violet Vanbrugh, who was playing with him at the St. James's, that it was the best play that he had read for months. He said the same thing to the author. He discussed its production; it was his great wish, he said, to appear in it at the St. James's himself. For a time, indeed, this was virtually taken for granted, though the date was still uncertain owing to previous commitments and plans. But then the incalculable theatre took charge again. For pretence and illusion creep into every part of it, and though the St. James's was one of the most business-like organisations in the whole great game, even Alexander must be swayed by professional moods.

It appears, then, that he won't be producing "The Two Kinds of Women," under this or any other title. He will continue to praise



it, but on second thoughts it will strike him and his courtiers that Paul Digby is a pretty weak and unheroic sort of hero, and that Kate Ommancey has a far better acting part. So presently he will have another idea; to put it on at the St. James's for a series of matinées, with H. B. Irving—now a member of his company—as Paul. But this won't please Barrie, and why should it? It's treating him as a beginner; it's prejudicing his chances; and after some arguments and manœuvrings the scheme is dropped. Later, but not for another year, it will still be Alexander who does as much as anyone to get the play produced, but meanwhile there is some secret soreness on the author's side. He says very little about it; he is an expert now at outward patience and composure. But beneath the surface he is anything but a humble author, and if anyone should happen to praise Alexander during these months, one of those eyebrows will lift. The majestic head will roll slowly round, as if from distaste for a faintly regrettable smell. The temperature will fall suddenly by several degrees. And somehow this particular actor-manager won't be mentioned again.

In May Barrie and Robertson Nicoll gave a rather sumptuous little banquet, surrounded by other literary lights, to Professor Masson—who was now seventy-eight—in a room at the Savoy Hotel. With speeches, of course, by the three principals; though the substance of Nicoll's—which he used for an article in the *British Weekly*—is all the printed record that remains. Seventeen years since Barrie's graduation, and look what has come to pass. The mighty Masson, it is true, is a guest of honour, but in a sense he is a captive as well. For one of his little hosts a ghostly lecture-room still haunts the present scene. Highly satisfactory, unless, perhaps, even seventeen years has been too long. Masson is pleased, and proud, and gratified. The literary lights drink his health and applaud. But Barrie, for whom always the Savoy Hotel has a special and almost spiritual significance, has even better sauce than hunger this evening. This, as he rises sadly and wearily to address the gathering, and in another moment to make it laugh, is a very particular moment in life.

One wonders, suddenly, if Frohman was in the hotel that night. Very likely. In fact, almost certainly at this time of year, though of course he wasn't at the banquet. The chances are that he was reading plays in his rooms overlooking the river—it wasn't until some

years later that he began occupying the better-known suite in Savoy Court—though he might have been sitting in a box somewhere, simultaneously munching sweets and absorbing the essence of a possible play. It was this summer, in any case, that he was sitting in the grill-room—only the management preferred to call it the *Café Parisien* then—with Seymour Hicks, who was to join his constellation at any moment now; and that Hicks saw Barrie coming in, and effected a second introduction.

And this was what really started it. Not that Frohman, even yet or until the end of its own story, was ever really tempted by "The Two Kinds of Women." In fact, it would be another two years, and with a very different sort of comedy, before business relations would be resumed. But Hicks, of course, was a wit. And Frohman, with perhaps a quarter if not a tenth of Hicks's vocabulary, could be extraordinarily funny and epigrammatic when he chose. It may have been that these two decided to show off a little. It might very well have been that Barrie, with his profound resistance to anyone else's humour, would react by putting a damper on the whole table. But he didn't. There was always the alternative, even with such odds against him, of showing how funny he could be himself. That's what he must have done, and Frohman's oriental eyes began to gleam and twinkle. Now, at last, the spell was beginning to work.

But it was based on more than laughter. There was—as they were now both beginning to discover—a sympathy of outlook, too. For the little Jew from Sandusky, Ohio, and the little Scotchman from Kirriemuir were both victims of the same absorbing passion for the stage. They couldn't escape this, for it was deep in their hearts and bones, though they both saw its absurdity as well as its glamour. Each wanted to be in it up to the neck, but each, it seemed, must be known to the public only as a name. They felt this, and other things. They both liked telling stories, and though Frohman's were all stage-stories, he, also, could tell them remarkably well. To Barrie, again, that simplicity and honesty, in a man of this position and profession, came with all the delight that he found in anything odd or out of the way. Soon, for soon enough there were more meetings, he was revelling in his discovery. Revelling, also, in the knowledge that other playwrights would have given their ears to be on these terms. It amused and enchanted him that he could pass, let us say, from Box Hill or the nursery at

Kensington Park Gardens into a room full of typescripts and cigar-smoke at the Savoy, and be equally at home in all three. This was the kind of multiple impersonation that he adored.

And Frohman so unmistakably represented Power. So that presently—yes, this should be another game—Barrie must stand behind him, even more invisibly, and direct it by his own ingenuity and skill. He liked that idea enormously. He loved to feel, not only in the theatre, that he could sit somewhere, quietly and in the background, as the ultimate arbiter of Fate. Sometimes, no doubt, this belief was a complete illusion; but Charles Frohman would come to foster it and make it true. For he and Barrie just fascinated each other, though of the two there can be little question that Barrie was far more fascinated by himself. From some of the Barrie worlds, moreover, though fewer than you might suspect, C.F. will always be cut off; and sometimes, at certain demands, he, too, will suddenly find that he has asked too much. But both will certainly receive vast value from this friendship, and Frohman is never going to measure his profit and loss.

Already, when he returns to New York this July, London will have begun to mean J. M. Barrie, and every summer the strength of this feeling will grow. Soon they will be going off to Paris together, and later, at least once, to Berlin, while Frohman works and Barrie makes holiday, or they both sit cross-legged together and tell stories and laugh. Many exceedingly illegible communications will pass between them during the rest of these years, and they will honour and entertain each other's recommended friends. All this and much more is coming, though no one can see it yet, from that meeting among waiters at the Savoy.

The cricket began earlier this summer, and there was more of it. A rival enthusiast for some of the stranger aspects of the game had now arisen in Edwin Abbey, who having discovered it, as an American, rather late in life seemed determined by his speed and violence to make up for lost time. "Abbey," wrote J.M.B., after his death, "would have tried to stop a thunderbolt to save the third run." And again: "The only fault he found in cricket was that it was not sufficiently dangerous. He tried to remedy this. As soon as you struck the ball you remembered Abbey and flung yourself on your face." Having tasted blood, as you might say, at Broadway, he now appointed himself captain of a team of artists, and challenged

the Allahakbarries to meet them on a ground near Denmark Hill. The date he offered was Friday, May 19th, or the morning after the dinner to Masson. Nevertheless, Barrie instantly took up the gage.

Very much the same side as usual turned out, though it was in this match that H. Hesketh Prichard, an author who was also a real county cricketer, joined the literary eleven. He was a bowler, and in first-class matches the field generally assembled within a few inches of his bat, but to-day he made twenty-six. Barrie made three, Partridge and Hornung made four each, but Ford and Pawling knocked up sixty-six between them. Reed and Mason failed to score—and Ford's bowling produced forty-six runs in three overs—but it was the Allahakbarries who won.

They were out again on the first of June, though playing this time for Doyle, and beat a very similar team of artists by a hundred and seventy-one. They were in their stride now. They played Bradbury, in Kent, on June 17th, and a week later met the Savile Club. But all this was merely in preparation for Broadway, and there on July 1st—in the newly-chosen club colours which now seemed essential—they took the field for the third time. Meanwhile the captain had had another idea, or a development of an old one. He was writing a little book again, he was getting his friends to illustrate it, and another old friend, W. B. Laikie, of Constable's in Edinburgh, was seeing about the printing. This little volume—*The Allahakbarrie Book of Broadway Cricket for 1899*—which runs to thirty-three pages, with six drawings and ten photographs, contains a guide to Broadway, some historical matter of an impudent description, and a long forecast of the forthcoming match. Dedicated to "Our Dear Enemy, Mary de Navarro." Concluding with a poem by Owen Seaman, and a prize competition—open only to the female supporters, and won, in the event, by Mrs. Partridge—for the best set of prophetic answers to eleven more or less preposterous questions. It was distributed to all concerned, as a surprise, at a banquet at the Lygon Arms on the eve of the game; and copies have since been sold in America for as much as a hundred pounds.

And that, in a way—though still unforeseen—was already part of the trouble. The match itself—practically the same players as last year, but with Birrell (possibly the worst cricketer of all) in place of Doyle—was as much fun as ever. So were the dinners, so was the dancing, and so were the undignified sports. But, alas, this third

annual gathering of quite so many distinguished characters, all making public fools of themselves, had attracted the extremely unwelcome attention of the Press. Reporters arrived, photographers appeared, and even another victory for the temporarily invincible authors left their captain in a sour and resentful frame of mind. He might have expected it, but he couldn't stand it. So no more Broadway cricket after this final match of the season of '99. Next year—but as we shall see, there will be a further reason—the festival must be held elsewhere.

A few days later the Barries set off for Schwalbach, in Germany, where Mrs. Barrie had been recommended a course of the waters, and there they remained for the rest of July. In August they took a small and hideously furnished house at Rustington, on the still unravished south coast. George Meredith was in another house in the neighbourhood. And the Llewelyn Davieses were even nearer. George and Jack rode on donkeys, and bathed, and Barrie, with a new camera, took a number of successful snapshots. Played games. Told stories. And bicycled, and bathed too. And had the Gilmours to stay. But wasn't doing much work after the first week or so, for *Tommy and Grizel* had at last gone off to the typists, and a spell of fine weather came aptly at the end of this long task.

He had the current note-book with him, however, and suddenly we spot this.

"94. *Play. Scene*—Servants entertained in drawing-room by mistress and master à la Carlisle family."

Somebody must have told him of this, and the reference is obviously to Rosalind, Countess of Carlisle, who was Lady Airlie's sister, and combined advanced radical principles with a manner which terrified members of every class. But you see, of course, what else she had done. She, or this story about her, had planted the first germ of *The Admirable Crichton*.

In September the Barries went up to Kirriemuir, where Strath View was temporarily open again, and various relations joined them. The Press had got hold of another story, which they would repeat at intervals for many years; but which never annoyed the subject of this periodic rumour. They said that Mr. J. M. Barrie was going to stand for Parliament. He wasn't. Sometimes, though not now, he played with the idea. May even have written his name

with "M.P." after it, to see how it would look. Later, also, there were authentic offers from more than one constituency, and he was flattered, and pretended to hesitate; or for a day or two pretended that he had accepted, and had romped in with an enormous majority, and had been given a portfolio at once. He knew well enough at such moments what was wrong with the world, and the identity of the Prime Minister—why not?—who could put it right. Only another day-dream, though, and he always woke up in time. How miserably bored he would have been if he had dreamed too long for once, and had been elected, and had found what it really meant. But of course he would never grow tired, from a safe distance, of seeing himself as the power behind any and every kind of throne.

No, what he was actually doing in September—as well as exchanging more visits with the de Navarros, who were now staying at Glamis—was pecking at half a dozen plots for half a dozen plays, and arranging, by correspondence, for Bernard Partridge to illustrate *Tommy and Grizel* in *Scribner's Magazine*. "The time," he wrote of his story, and indeed it says so in the text, "is thirty years ago." Partridge looked up the fashions, and sent back a drawing which immediately made it quite plain to the author that he hadn't meant thirty years at all. He'd meant ten. Or fifteen. Or perhaps, if it came to that, he had really been thinking of the present day. Troubles of an illustrator with a novelist whose only period, at any time, was the one that he had in his mind at the moment, and who now admitted that he didn't even know what his characters looked like. Except one. "I can be of more help to you," he writes again, "when you come to Grizel." This was at the beginning of October, from an hotel in Edinburgh, where the Barries were delayed some weeks on their return journey, apparently owing to the state of his father's health. Back at the end of the month, and from Gloucester Road once more he makes his meaning clearer.

"For your second sketch would you mind simply doing a picture of Grizel? Mrs. Llewelyn Davies whom she is meant to be a bit like is willing to sit to you for this and she has some idea of the dressing too. If you like this idea would you communicate with her about it?"

So Bernard Partridge communicated, and joined the long list of those who tried to draw the beautiful Mrs. Davies—with considerably more success than some. Do we realise, for there is no mention

of it in any letter yet, what else had happened while the Barries were at the Balmoral Hotel? The Boer War had begun. Elandslaagte, Nicholson's Nek, Ladysmith, Mafeking, Kimberley; Sir George White, Sir John French, Sir Redvers Buller, Colonel Baden-Powell; these were the names that were suddenly filling the newspapers, as the long story of muddle, and defeat, and then gradual, costly victory started on its way. Two and a half years of warfare for the British in South Africa now, of strained relations and blows to nearly a century of tradition in Europe; all leading in the direction of a vast change.

Yet still this was hidden from most onlookers, and there was little disturbance at home. By the time it was over, income tax would have risen from eightpence to no less than one and threepence in the pound; but meanwhile there were few other inconveniences, and never, in the darkest hour, the least fear that the war could ever come nearer than six thousand miles away. The enemy had no fleet, and nobody had any aeroplanes. So in England they sang or whistled *The Absent-Minded Beggar*, and pinned little flags on maps. Or they shouted "Kruger!" after old men with chin beards. Or if they were children they wore little portraits of their favourite generals, much as they sported light or dark blue favours in the weeks before the University Boat-Race. It was a gentleman's war, it was said afterwards, as if that could ever be true. But in any case, no British civilian need have anything to do with it, unless he chose.

It produced no political coalition. The Conservatives had started it, so most Liberals were opposed to it. Thus they ranged themselves, and thus they contentedly remained. The Liberals who went further than this were called Little Englanders or Pro-Boers, thus splitting their own party and at present doing the other no harm. As for Barrie, who was a Liberal by birth and upbringing, and still hadn't thought of being anything else, he wished the whole thing could have been avoided, but admittedly, on occasion, was found reading the *Daily Mail*. No trace, however, of hostilities in his output. "War stories," says a note at one moment, but he never wrote them, and one may well doubt if it were ever more than a very distant thought. War stories had nothing to do with his own peaceful, private world.

Up in Edinburgh just now he had made another entry. "130.

'Quality Street' in Leith & N. Berwick." And already, though this was still but a name that had caught his eye, the play that would be known by it was, of course, something more than a matter of notes. The two Misses Adam of Bank Street, Kirriemuir, with their Hanky School, had turned about five years ago into Miss Kitty and Miss Ailie of *Sentimental Tommy*, and it was their story which had given it that strong dash of *Cranford*. Now they were coming back again, through all the other scraps and oddments of ideas. Not in Scotland, not with these names, and not—as the playwright took over from the novelist—with quite the same story. An unmistakable pair, though, and the setting—a children's school kept by two spinsters—remained a fixed part of the plan. Pipes were smoked over it, walks were taken in Kensington Gardens. Sometimes it was clearer, sometimes it retreated, and sometimes that master and mistress who entertained their servants—and by now were mixed up with an inverted version of that Duke and Lady's Maid—cut right across it and insisted on going for the walk instead. They weren't the only ones. Often there were four or five sets of companions, looming, as it were, on some half-lit stage, as the author eyed them, tried to marshal them, and then for the moment let them have their own way.

But though George Alexander was still blocking and delaying "The Two Kinds of Women," a novel, in the same author's opinion, must still be followed by a play. After that, of course, a novel again, and so on. Subject to the fact that nothing had ever come out just how or when it was intended, this was the pattern or formula to which he still clung. In the study, therefore, from notes, memories, his own old chapters, and from whatever was added day by day from within and without, *Quality Street* was gradually turning into acts and scenes. As usual, a long, tortuous path lay ahead of it, and the author—who had still overlooked one note—would presently be calling it "Phoebe's Garden." But the pen was in charge of it, and was going to feel far more at home, before it had finished, than it had ever felt with that Chelsea artist and his complicated private life.

So, once more, to the end of a year; and to the end—as some said, though there was a good deal of argument on the point—of a century. In any case, the new calendars that were exchanged this Christmas bore an exceptionally unfamiliar figure. 1900. It mightn't, perhaps, be the real end of the century for another twelve months, but no one who saw this symbol could fail to feel—more than ever



this time—that they were stepping forward into a new and uncharted world. The Twentieth Century. Amazing and almost incredible, though they had watched it coming for years. It was a stranger, or else they were all strangers suddenly. Never in their memory had there been a New Year quite like this. Even at the Lewises' party on this occasion there was a momentary feeling of awe.

Barrie took George and Jack Davies to a pantomime, *The Babes in the Wood*, at the Coronet Theatre (which is now a cinema) in Notting Hill Gate. As he looked round the crowded auditorium a thought came to him—and was noted, and presently used—that all these men who were taking the other children had wanted to marry their mothers. It wasn't so in his own case, but he liked and held on to the idea. And as George and Jack laughed and leapt up and down, he was trying on another new rôle in the dark.

That dead year which had now joined the others had added nothing to his public output, though he had worked hard enough. There had been no new play, so far as playgoers were aware, and his only book had been the little privately-printed pamphlet about the cricket. Nevertheless, from publishers, from tours of *The Little Minister*, and from the interest on his still growing investments, he had again cleared twelve thousand pounds. Far more than he spent or needed, though he had been subsidising his father and his uncle and as many other relations as had shown the least wish to share in his wealth. Always generous like that. So often puzzled and wretched when his money didn't immediately bring happiness and good fortune as well. It was beginning to worry him—not that he was tired or would ever really tire of success—that this inescapable by-product was piling up and adding to his responsibilities all the time. He would never be poor again, and of course he didn't want to be poor again, but somehow he was becoming much less grateful than he had been in the past. For people didn't understand—and how could they if they weren't rich too?—how subtly a big income could change one's surroundings and oneself. If he could escape again and go back—— But he couldn't. If he left off writing—but he couldn't do that, either. He was so bored, so hideously bored, if he kept away from his study. And in it he could still be so happy, pretending and then almost believing that this was Grenville Street or Furnivals Inn again. If he didn't work, there was no point in

the rest of his life. And only with work as a constant background did he feel in the mood to play.

What else could he possibly do, then, except go on like this? Nothing. So on he went, haunted, and then again without knowing it becoming just a little spoilt. The money was doing that. It made his friends look at him differently, and it made him, as it always does, more difficult to contradict. He had a thousand tricks for getting his own way without it; but with it he was so often doubly in a world apart.

When and how, he was wondering even more than the others now, had it all started going wrong?

Up again, with a new idea, a new bout of work, and new methods—because he was feeling so clever again—for amusing the little Davieses. Down, with another headache, into the pit of black despair. All this was going on behind the scenes now, as henceforth it always would. No one could really help him at his worst, and at his best it was still so obviously he who was helping others. In the enormous half-way series of impersonations he was A's best friend at one moment, B's slave at another, and C's would-be tyrant at a third. Charming, fascinating, elusive, emotional, unconcerned. Who else is all that? Any child, of course; but this one, this strange, lucky, and unlucky child of nearly forty was still searching for a lost mother and lost playfellows; and was making two hundred and fifty pounds a week.

In January, just four years after its fore-runner, *Tommy and Grizel*, with the Partridge illustrations, started in *Scribner's Magazine*. Again it was to run until the autumn, when Cassell's and Scribner's would publish it in book form. And again, as the various sets of proofs came in, the author constantly corrected and re-wrote. Four years is a long gap between two halves of the same story, and though in the first instalment there was some of the old gaiety of *When A Man's Single*—with O. P. Pym in the mantle of Noble Simms—it was soon clear enough to many readers that both Tommy and the author had changed. Or perhaps that they hadn't changed; but that what had been funny and harmless in the hero's childhood seemed increasingly uncomfortable and even painful now that he was supposed to be a man. Friends, of course, instantly began spotting the autobiography, which would continue to crop up until the end. But friends and strangers alike had the

same uneasy feeling that there was a kind of bitterness this time, where before the mockery had all been in fun. With each number their bewilderment and discomfort increased. For this wasn't the strangeness of another fairyland, but of a world where grown-up people still suffered like children, or where children never grew up. Where, they began wondering, was the Barrie whom they had thought to be synonymous with humour and charm? And why, as he tortured them with all these exaggerated misunderstandings and presently, worse still, by driving his heroine mad, must they also feel that he was deliberately tormenting himself?

To an early complainant he wrote: "Poor Tommy! Of course he carries it to the *n*th degree. I agree with all your views on the subject, but somehow Tommy himself had to work out this way." Quite true; but as he passed on to other matters, he still seemed quite unconscious of what he had really done. The second part of this psychological study was so personal and so morbid—that's to say when it wasn't just being melodramatic or absurd—that one might have thought, even with the proofs before him, he would have tried to suppress it or draw back. But no. It had "worked out this way," and all he could apparently see now was the detail of paragraphs and sentences, and how in themselves they could be improved. The blind spot was there again, and hid everything that he had exposed. This, he seems to have thought, was the way one wrote novels. And yet how impatient, and even angry, he could be with other authors when they, too, unveiled their private lives.

The year went on and the war went on; and Barrie—though there are notes already for *The Little White Bird*—went on with his proofs and his play. Or with more than one play now, after all, as further ideas fell into scenes rather than chapters. But when Frohman came over in April, urgently demanding another vehicle for Miss Adams, there was still nothing ready for him. Only stories to whet his appetite and make his eyes glitter, on what was probably the first joint trip to Paris. So Miss Adams, who had had to put up with Shakespeare last season, must put up with Rostand in the autumn. But Frohman was ready and waiting now, for all the stories had fascinated him at once.

Now, also, Alexander had at last made up his mind. He couldn't and wouldn't produce "The Two Kinds of Women" at the St. James's; but he had passed it on, with the strongest possible recom-

mentation, to Arthur Bouchier, who had recently become associated with Wyndham at the Criterion, and again thought it just the thing for the public, if not for himself. Unquestionably, however, the part of Mrs. Ommaney—as she had always felt, too—would be admirably suited to his wife. So another theatre should be taken for her in the autumn, he would be the manager, and Miss Violet Vanbrugh should be the star. Not all settled at once, and again, of course, there might be slips and set-backs. But it did really look this time as if the play would have its chance.

Meanwhile, as Barrie again turned his thoughts towards cricket, Mrs. Barrie turned hers towards a cottage—a permanent holiday home of their own—in the country. And found it, and bought it, and set to work at doing it up. Black Lake Cottage, it was called, after the sheet of water, a few hundred yards away, where herons nested and perhaps still do. In Surrey, about a couple of miles to the south-east of Farnham, on the road which runs towards Tilford, and then on, over Frensham Common, to Hindhead. There it still stands, and still in the thick, scented pine-woods that grow on that sandy soil. But it was a very different cottage before Mrs. Barrie had done with it, for year after year she put her cleverness into it and the garden as well, and it spread, this way and that, until in the end you would hardly have called it a cottage at all.

Farnham was, and officially remains, some thirty-eight miles from London, but in 1900 it wasn't only that London, by comparison with what has happened since, had hardly started sprawling, but there was still scarcely a car to be seen on the roads. The salmon-coloured trains of the South-Western Railway took you peacefully down from Waterloo, and then you bicycled or drove behind a horse, until presently, to the right of the dusty, yellow road, there was a sudden clearing in the trees. Here, in still unspoilt Surrey and the very depths, as it seemed, of the country, the little two-storey cottage stood. On three sides the dark woods came right up to the edge of the garden, and as you climbed the rising ground at the back, there were glimpses and then a wide prospect through the tall, straight trunks of acres of tree-tops laid out below. No other house, in those days, was within sight or sound. And though under grey skies there was something a little forbidding about the way that Black Lake Cottage was shut in, the summer poured plenty of sunlight through its windows and over the long, level lawn. It was well chosen for peace and quietness. Again there was a study for the author up-

stairs. Or if he wanted to walk, there were miles of hidden tracks and lonely footpaths through the woods and commons on every side. It was a paradise for the noble and gentle Porthos.

While painters painted, while workmen hammered, and Mrs. Barrie bought furniture and curtains, the Allahakbarries were again putting on their flannels and swinging their own or each other's bats. In May there was a return match with Abbey's artists at Denmark Hill, in which the smaller captain made the astonishing score of 19. Mason, 0. Maurice Hewlett, 0 (not out). But there is no record of who actually won. A few days later there was a so-called, and indeed aptly entitled, Duffers' Match, in which there were enough Allahakbarries—regular or impressed for the occasion—to form both sides. Then Mason seems to have got up a team, and still more weakness and inefficiency were displayed. This brought the season to the middle of June.

Early in July, though, the Barries descended on the rear-guard of workmen and painters, and now, with his own, country headquarters, the captain must arrange for a match that should be the climax of all. Black Lake must take the place of Broadway—which needn't, however, feel huffy, as this year the de Navarros were away—and all the feasting and sports should take place on the new little estate. The Gilmours, Birrells, Will Merediths, Mason, and others from last year, were all coming down in a reserved saloon carriage; as many as possible would be crammed into the cottage, while quarters for the rest would be found in Tilford or elsewhere. They would arrive on the Friday and stay till the Monday, and so they did, and again the whole festival was an enormous success. The captain had discovered some villagers to challenge, and the cricket lasted all Saturday—July 21st—though once more there is regrettable uncertainty over the result. And on Sunday there was a croquet tournament on the long lawn, in which the female supporters also took part.

Not real croquet. Not that endless and far too exacting game, at which, for all its sluggish progress, it is so remarkably easy to lose one's temper. But golf-croquet, the new variant which some inspired character had recently given to the world. This, for J.M.B., had instantly become a mania only second to cricket, and he must have played it thousands of times during the next thirty-odd years. No one ever had such an eye, or no one at any rate combined it with such astonishing luck. One can't say that he was

never beaten—particularly as it was part of the fun, very often, to choose a partner with no eye or experience at all—but in any contest it would be hard to say when he was beaten. From far away, with his pipe still in his mouth, he would take a sight and let fly; and the next moment another miracle had occurred. Or from some near-by but heavily-stymied position his ball would leap and pass straight through the hoop. In tactics he was incomparable. The game never had a greater or more devoted exponent.

As, however, it is, or at any rate was, a game with no governing Club or Association, he admittedly made his own rules. One was that nobody, male or female, must ever swing the mallet between their own feet. Others, perhaps, were less surprising, but whatever they were, you must always accept what you were told. There was no appeal, and it was quite useless to say that you had played differently elsewhere. So the Barrie code spread, for it was far simpler to adopt it than to argue, and soon enough the whole circle were playing under it, wherever they found a croquet-lawn, and playing like mad. All, that is to say, except Hewlett, whose lawn at Broadchalke—his own beautiful little country house near Salisbury—was so precipitously tilted, that a code for balls that didn't move of their own accord was no use.

But Charles Frohman, for whom even this amount of exercise was against all precedent, would find himself playing golf-croquet at Black Lake. And because it was Barrie who made him do it, he was fascinated. Insisted on installing hoops, pegs, and all the rest of it at the retreat which he shared with another manager, Charles Dillingham, outside New York. Amazement of all onlookers, and, alas, disillusionment for C.F. Even with other English playwrights it just wasn't the same game. It wasn't funny, or exciting, and there was no magic. Barrie, he discovered again, had got to be there for that.

There were no Llewelyn Davieses at the first Black Lake carnival. Two notes—unnumbered—for *The Little White Bird* show why.

"Jack (to man) 'Mother's upstairs painting the cradle.'

"On birth of brother, agitation. They finally decide to give him their Methuen button. Mother pleased, not understanding."

The Methuen button celebrated, of course, another of the British generals in South Africa. The brother was Michael Davies, born

on the 16th of June. That's why there were no Davieses at the cricket, but later they took a house near Arundel, and Barrie was over there often enough. Meanwhile, Mason stayed on in Surrey, laughing as loudly as ever—a note indisputably reveals that it was his laugh that went to the husband in *The Little White Bird*—taking part in more bicycle rides, and not infrequently (according to his companion) falling off. And other visitors came and went, as the last workmen vanished for the time being, and the cottage turned more and more into a settled home.

The host was forty now, but he didn't look it. His face, that is to say, had hollows and lines and shadows, and sometimes it seemed that centuries of experience had been etched into its strange modelling. Then he smiled, and it was a face that was neither young nor old. His hair was as thick and dark as ever; his figure was still slight. Even from the back, it is true, he wasn't exactly a boy, but from no quarter could you really believe that he knew what birthdays meant. He was just Barrie, as he always had been. There was no accounting for his appearance or anything else.

He and Mrs. Barrie—who was now quite definitely looking a little younger every year—were at their cottage all August, but early in September there were London rehearsals again. Bouchier, who was still playing at the Criterion, had now taken over the Garrick as well, and "The Two Kinds of Women" was to open there at the end of the month. Not under this title, though. It had become and would remain *The Wedding Guest*, and in addition to Miss Violet Vanbrugh, the cast now included H. B. Irving (on loan from Alexander) and his wife, Miss Dorothea Baird. This beautiful creature, whom the theatrical public must always associate with *Trilby*, was to play the innocent Scotch bride; though as a matter of fact she wasn't Barrie's first choice. In that pantomime at Notting Hill last Christmas he had spotted Miss Ethel Irving—no relation to the Lyceum—who was still a singer and dancer, and had had a hard struggle to get her for the part instead. But Bouchier wouldn't risk it, and Bright and the producer backed him up. So Miss Irving must wait; Barrie yielded this time; and Miss Baird was engaged.

What a lot of B's! Yet at once there's another one; if not, indeed, the most important of all. For the producer—at this moment also playing at the Criterion—was Dion Boucicault, who will now be in the stage part of the story again and again. Dion Boucicault the

younger, they still called him, though his even better-known father had been dead for ten years. Or Dot Boucicault, or just Dot, to all who knew him behind the scenes. A little man, like Bright and Barrie; born in America; ten years an actor-manager in Australia; forty-one now; and one of the first, as certainly the cleverest, to take up this job of production or direction as a line in itself.

Thorough, incessantly conscientious and painstaking, a complete expert on everything in the theatre, and with a standard of polish and efficiency as high as has yet been known. But admittedly an autocrat. You mustn't argue with him. Whatever you thought of your own professional experience, you still had to do what you were told. If you didn't immediately understand, he caught you by the wrist and pulled you round the stage until you did. Or perhaps you thought you could dance, but Boucicault, in his hat and overcoat, would still give a practical demonstration of what was right. Music? Look at him teaching the conductor his own business. Lighting? His vocabulary of technical terms was as vast as, to anyone but himself and the chief electrician, it was obscure. Effects? He knew them all backwards, or could immediately invent any new one that was required. Almost everyone was a little afraid of him, but if he spared no one, he most certainly never spared himself. Though never really, save in a few lucky parts, more than a competent actor—for how could he be, when he was secretly acting every other part as well?—he was a great force and influence in the theatre. And though a year or two later Barrie would have learnt—which no one else ever did—how to twist him round his little finger, there were several severe collisions at the rehearsals that had just begun.

For here were two men who both knew best, but of whom Boucicault was more generally regarded as likely to be right. So some of Barrie's little hints and suggestions were swept aside, and then, when they became more than hints and suggestions, he had to fight for them inch by inch. And didn't by any means always win, as his adversary, with nothing but success and perfection at heart, took to criticising and tampering with the text. To and fro they struggled, in the dim light of the rehearsals, which had none of the vague, haphazard methods of Toole or the ever-obliging adaptability of Cyril Maude. By the middle of the month Barrie—who was now spending some of his nights with Mason, at Queen



Anne's Mansions, and for others dashing down to Black Lake—was writing to Gilmour of "my bleeding and broken play."

A year later—which was the very fortunate year of his marriage to Miss Irene Vanbrugh—Boucicault was taken over entirely by Frohman, and directed for him at the Duke of York's and elsewhere for the next fourteen years on end. Brilliantly, and if often extravagantly, almost always to the greater glory, and with the full approval, of his Napoleonic chief. What's more, even in this position he wouldn't have produced play after play by Barrie, if the author hadn't learnt in those painful weeks at the Garrick to put his merits far above his faults. But Bouchier wasn't Frohman, to support that same author through thick and thin. And in September, 1900, any other manager must have felt that Boucicault—his father's son, with twenty years' experience—knew more about the stage. So for the moment Barrie must buy his own experience. And did; for there's no question that he'll be a much more slippery customer next time.

The first performance took place on Thursday, September 27th, and appeared to be well received. The audience, that is to say, obviously enjoyed the opening act, with its unusual and attractive scene of the Scotch wedding. In the second they were charmed by Miss Joan Burnett—daughter of the Jennie Lee who had been playing Jo when Barrie first reached London—as a little Scotch servant-girl who "mothered" the illegitimate doll. There was at least enough suspense in the rest of the play to keep them wondering what was going to happen next. And though in a sense nothing did happen, because nothing could, there were distinct and friendly calls for the author at the end; which met, as usual, with no response.

But the Press wasn't nearly so amiable or gentle. They praised the production and the acting, but the play they just couldn't accept. *The Times*, which was A. B. Walkley by this time, found it "curiously naïve and curiously mannered," and also "technically unsatisfactory." "In sum," it said, "the more we see of Mr. Barrie's talent on the stage, the more we sigh for his talent in the novel." For the stage, it added, needs "genuine spontaneous dramatic faculty, and that, in our judgment, Mr. Barrie has not."

The *Daily Telegraph*, which may or may not have been W. L. Courtney—for though he was their chief critic now, his style was less distinctive, and the notice is unsigned—accused *The Wedding*

*Guest* of "unpleasantness, painfulness and doubtful morality." Indeed it seemed really alarmed by the encouragement which it detected for promiscuous seduction; and though Bouchier instantly wrote to complain, and it obligingly printed a whole column in reply, it still couldn't bring itself to approve more than the staging and the individual performances. In December there were further amends, when Courtney, who was also editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, printed the whole play as a supplement to his current issue. But by this time, though it had done well enough for the first two months, it was a dying venture, and on January 12th, after a run of fifteen weeks, it was played for the last time. Half-way through the run, by the way, though this had nothing to do with the drop in public support, H. B. Irving was recalled by Alexander to the St. James's, and his part was taken over by Martin Harvey.

Well, fifteen weeks can't exactly be called a failure, though in those days a play could hang on much longer without actual loss. On the other hand, even with more than a hundred performances, nobody really considered that *The Wedding Guest* was a success. For somehow it seemed that Barrie had stepped off with the wrong foot at the beginning; it wasn't only that he had propounded an insoluble problem, but it was one in which he could never really be himself. He was being a playwright first, instead of Barrie expressing himself through a play. And in this direction he could go no further, without wasting or curbing the gifts that were never meant for such stage situations as this.

He knew it, though when he read those criticisms he didn't much like it. That would be human, and especially when *The Little Minister* had brought him more than his fair share of praise. But *The Little Minister* was still giving him financial freedom, and time to consider, and the kind of mental elbow-room that no one can hope for if there are more bills than cheques. And presently, though Walkley and others had practically forbidden him to write any more plays at all, he would be publicly thanking them for their support. And quite rightly. You can't do this, they had told him, under the utterly mistaken impression that he couldn't do anything else. But he could; and this was what they had really told him in that first September of the Boer War.

"I am pleased to know of myself," he wrote, just thirty years later, in *The Greenwood Hat*, "that I was not one who tossed unfavourable criticisms aside. I took my revenge instead in considering them

carefully and trying to draw sustenance from them; an ordeal at first, no doubt, but calming to the spirit."

It sounds almost too good to be true; and it wasn't true when he had dipped into his little box again and was writing plays with no thought of any other playwright but himself. It was quite true, though, of those lucky rebuffs which were such a disappointment to Bouchier, Bright, and Boucicault at the time. For once, though they may not have guessed it, the critics had done a good deed. And already, though they didn't know this either, unwieldy ballast was being thrown overboard from the study in Gloucester Road. Defiantly, it may have been, rather than humbly, in actual fact. Yet the upshot, and soon enough now, was bringing the real Barrie to his real and extraordinary position on the stage.

That, then, was the history of *The Wedding Guest*, in which Miss Violet Vanbrugh certainly added to her reputation; in which H. B. Irving—with a name that must always burden him with comparisons—still rather marked time; in which his wife again failed to escape comparison with herself as Trilby; in which Boucicault as a producer went up; in which Bouchier as a manager stayed where he was; in which two other actors—A. E. George and Henry Vibart—first acquired the Barrie hall-mark; and in which the author, it was generally felt, was either a little out of his depth or had somehow misjudged his powers.

He was silent himself, of course. He had believed in this play, and for a while he was deeply disappointed. Later it looks as if he, too, must have realised that he had believed in it too much; for here is another that he would never allow to be republished, and when, a number of years afterwards, Miss Vanbrugh wanted to revive it, he shook his head and put his foot down. There should be no second chance for *The Wedding Guest*. By this time, in fact, he would much rather not be reminded of it at all.

In October the Barries went north again, and in the same month *Tommy and Grizel* was published simultaneously in London and New York. As the American edition sold sixty thousand copies in the first year, and the British and Colonial editions topped twenty-seven thousand by the end of 1901, there was no question of failure in the book world. Actually, however, if anyone cares to turn back, they will see that though in America the corresponding sales of *Sentimental Tommy* had been more than doubled, at home there

was a considerable drop. No more, perhaps, than is common to almost all sequels, and again the total would go on rising for many a long year; but though the English critics were kind, there is no doubt that they were a little puzzled. And though a large number of readers wept and blew their noses, there was also a considerable body who were irritated and disturbed. The quality and individuality were stronger than ever, but grown-up people, they felt, didn't do these things, and the author ought to know it. And he oughtn't to kill his hero like that. It wasn't fair. Or, if he insisted on this, why, in Heaven's name, couldn't he kill his heroine too? Even Shakespeare, after all, had been more merciful than to make Ophelia "almost a middle-aged woman when she died."

Mysterious and dangerous creature. Yet if he had written a dozen more so-called novels, he could only, in all probability now, have used the same methods again. The medium was too loose and treacherous, he couldn't be trusted with it, he couldn't, even in fiction, conceal himself and his secrets under any other name. However he had begun, in a chapter or two he would have stepped into the foreground. He couldn't have helped it. With that pen there was no other choice.

It was Charles Frohman as much as anyone who saved him. C.F. wanted plays, not novels, and while publishers sat in their offices and waited, he kept coming across the Atlantic and asking for them. The novels, again, took far more time, so that the alternating system—with any sort of market in the theatre—had less and less chance. The plays, it is true, broke down often enough, and got into tangles, and never reached a third or fourth act. But their length was predetermined, they had to have a shape and pattern, and these and all the other constrictions put thinly-veiled autobiography out of bounds. Two lines of dialogue now must convey what could have been spread over a couple of pages in a novel. There could be no soliloquies, and by this time precious few asides. It was back, in a sense, to the old newspaper articles, with just so much space for each point and no more. Very good indeed for the author of *Tommy and Grizel*, who could concentrate but had never learnt to compress.

He still thought he was a novelist; that it was his duty, for some reason, to go on turning out books. And but for Frohman he would almost undoubtedly have tried. Later, too, there was another thing that he would pretend; which was that he had wanted to

write the novels, and that Frohman had stopped him. It wasn't quite fair. Frohman was another instrument of Providence or Destiny, and without him there might easily have been fewer plays; but the only thing that he really stopped was Barrie wasting his own time.

By the middle of November he was back in London, thinking a good deal about one more book. Still making notes for it and writing scraps of it, but hardly considering it as a novel—which, indeed, it never became. Still, also, feeling his way towards "Phœbe's Garden," but still slowly, and with very little except more notes and bits of dialogue on paper. On the other hand, though, he had just dashed off a complete play in four scenes, which had not only given him no trouble at all, but was already scheduled for production at an early date. Title, *The Greedy Dwarf: A Moral Tale*. Theatre, half the drawing-room at Gloucester Road. Alleged management, The Allahakbarrie Cricket Club. And alleged author, one "Peter Perkin," whose portrait on the outside of the programme would closely resemble Peter Llewelyn Davies, at an even earlier phase than his present age of not quite four.

This was the new game, and everyone had to play it. This was the solution for no cricket in the winter. A private pantomime, with the Captain of the Club as playwright, manager, producer, and one of the stars. "We have been mad enough," he wrote to Q, in Cornwall, "to be inveigled thereinto. . . . Our aim is to convulse the four-year-olds." But of course all the inveigling had been done by himself, and though the audience was to consist of children, it was he who was going to have quite as much fun. By Christmas-time the drawing-room was a scene of constant and preposterous rehearsals; the dresses, in the style of Kate Greenaway, were finished and being tried on; and though again some of the company wondered what on earth they were doing, the master of the revels continued to direct them with a firm and skilful hand. He was forty, and only one other member of the cast was under thirty; but this was the notion that had come into his head, and this, with no chance of resistance or mutiny, was what had got to be done.

The first and last performance of *The Greedy Dwarf* took place on the afternoon of Monday, January 7th, 1901, and here, omitting only the preliminary announcement of its title and supposed sponsors, is the full programme that was handed to the invited guests.

Prince Robin	Miss Sylvia du Maurier
Sleepyhead .	Mr. Mason
Cowardy Custard	Mr. Barrie
Allahakbarrie	Mr. Gerald du Maurier
Bruin, a Bear . .	Mr. Bright
Policeman . .	Mr. Meredith
Chang, a Dog .	Mr. Porthos
Dame Trot	Miss Priscilla Prunes

and

Brownie                      Miss Mary Contrairy

Scene I    A Glade in the Forest

Scene II   The Same Glade in Another Forest

Scene III   The Little Schoolhouse in the Wood

Scene IV   The Horrible Home of the Greedy Dwarf

Chief of the Orchestra                      Mrs. Meredith

Enormous Engagement of

Miss Sylvia du Maurier

Who has been Brought Back from the

year 1892 in a Hansom to play

The Principled Boy

Have you never seen Mr. Bright as a Bear?

No? Then you have never seen him at Home

The School Scene

will contain

A Scathing Exposure

of

Our Educational System

Miss Mary Contrairy

will spell Allahakbarrie in

the last Act

The whole

to conclude

in

A Blaze of Glory.

The children in front, only few of whom had ever seen a play at all, would never forget that afternoon. None of them, perhaps, would remember the plot, simple as it was and almost implicit in the programme; but to see grown-up people dressed up, and fighting each other, or being brave, or romantic, or funny; to know at least some of their faces, and yet to find them transformed like this—here was richness, and amazement, and silent joy. The scenery was primitive, the wood being represented by some trellis and green muslin, the drawing-room itself providing one of the interiors, and a few screens the other. But there was a real electrician—sometimes rather too visible in the prompt corner—with a real spot-light, and though no one seems to remember the concluding *Blaze of Glory*, it may well have been that by this time they had had all the glory they could stand.

Mrs. Llewelyn Davies, modestly draped, and hardly attempting to act, smiled exquisitely at the onlookers with an air of bewildered apology. Mason put all his professional experience into the part of a comic sluggard. Barrie, the Bad Boy of the school, wearing a clubbed, corn-coloured wig—but retaining his moustache, so that some of the children found him almost as terrifying as the Dwarf—was of course unspeakably cowardly. His great scene was when he was challenged to fight, and delayed the proceedings by removing twelve waistcoats, one after another. Gerald du Maurier doubled the title-rôle—by a method in which his hands became feet, while someone else supplied arms—and the schoolmistress, who was a Dame indeed and sang a comic song. Addison Bright was completely encased in a mask and dark-brown plush. Will Meredith had actually no part at all, but filled in the intervals by striking fresh though delicious terror into the four-year-olds with his helmet and uniform. Porthos wrestled again with his master, ate a biscuit, and drank a tumbler of milk—all of which feats had been fitted into the action. And Mrs. Barrie, as the Good Little Girl, looked remarkably pretty, ultimately escaped all perils and dangers—but once only by disguising herself in a loose-cover as an arm-chair—and was a fairy-tale heroine from beginning to end. The Chief of the Orchestra performed by herself on the piano.

What fun, and what kindness. There was a glorious dining-room tea afterwards, at which the company reappeared, and the children still didn't quite know whether they were real or not. And then it was all over, with shawls, little coats, and four-wheelers summoned

by a whistle. Back to normal, dull life again for children and grown-ups alike. And of course it wasn't the Barries' fault that their party was followed by an epidemic of feverish colds, which hardly one child escaped. In fact, that might just as easily have happened after a visit to Drury Lane.

Gerald du Maurier. Yes, he was the one who was still under thirty, and this, of course, was his first appearance in a play by J.M.B. One guesses why he was in it, and is quite right. He was Sylvia's brother, the little Davieses' uncle, and must have been in the story now for some time. Read what the family chronicler has written for a true portrait of Gerald, who never could disentangle his defects and qualities, and went on laughing—but more and more harshly and ruefully—at both. There were half a dozen Barrie plays of which no one who saw the original productions can think without thinking of Gerald. In each he contrived to make them even more like Barrie plays than they were already, though he hated, or thought he hated, everything fanciful and whimsical, and swore by whisky and cold beef and golf. Because of this, perhaps, or because he was Sylvia's brother, or because he was one of the very few actors that he had anything to do with in private life, Barrie used to say that he was the only manly actor on the stage. Which was certainly meant not only as a tribute, but as another dig at all the rest. Yet no one, in many of his moods, could wallow in being more like an actor than Gerald, for he was proud and ashamed of it at the same time; and wondering always whether he weren't really an amateur, had so often to be more of a professional than he felt.

In spite, however, of the half-dozen plays and that candid if two-edged compliment, he and Barrie were never really close friends. They thought they saw through each other, and then again they weren't at all sure that they weren't being seen through themselves. There was often a kind of jealousy, too, when each found himself wanting the other's more special and peculiar gifts—though of course as well as his own. Often they were at loggerheads, and once, in the most miserable manner, there was a long and complete break. Yet each actually, and with his own curious qualifications, was so much more loyal than the things he sometimes said. Each had his prejudices, and intolerances, and self-justifications, and the story was going to take more than one difficult and testing twist. Plenty of reasons for mutual gratitude, but plenty, undoubtedly, for rankling resentment as well.



Not yet though. Perhaps already there were shadows over some of the players in *The Greedy Dwarf*, yet although there was a certain amount of reaction afterwards, nobody, of course, could look even five years ahead. It was never revived, and the Allahak-barries—though they would have had no choice if their captain had given the order—never presented another play. Their cricket and croquet still went on, but there was no pantomime next Christmas, and the children who had hoped for it were just left to wonder why. Sad for them, but they'd been pretty lucky. And they would only have to wait through one more Christmas after that for something far more magical and thrilling than *The Greedy Dwarf*.

Here are some of the notes which the real author must have made almost as soon as the party was over, or at latest on the next day. Comments in square brackets by the biographer.

- "2. 'That's my mother—she's 34.' [Loud announcement suddenly made by Jack.]
- 4. Sea of faces—mouths open.
- 5. When dressed, go into hiding.
- 6. Fear of Atkins. [The parlourmaid at Gloucester Road.]
- 7. Listening to children on stairs. 'Is my hair tidy?' &c.
- 9. Policeman frightened to go down. [So it wasn't only the children who were alarmed.]
- 11. Cat's Contempt. Dog's interest. Dog exhausted & lying on sofa—trembling when curtain about to go up.
- 12. Children gazed intently—never smiled.
- 13. Their polite congratulations.
- 15. Prince rushing across footlights to Peter, because thinks he has hurt himself. Her terror that her boy's father is doing their hair (pinafores) wrongly.
- 19. Result of pantomime—that after it if anything surprising said I want to fall down.

Five days later *The Wedding Guest* was withdrawn. Ten more days, and the end of a much greater drama and far longer run. The end of an era as well as the end of a reign. Death of the Queen.

It was almost unbelievable, even to those who had known that she was dying. Victoria. V.R. V.R.I. As permanent an institution, she had seemed, as those letters permanently cast on the pillar-boxes. God Save the Queen, it had been, for sixty-three and a half

years. Now one must say God Save the King; yet to speak of the King at all seemed unnatural, portentous, something that still stuck in the throat. He was popular, of course, and would be more so. Presently he would be called Edward the Peacemaker; and indeed there would be peace in his time, if not in the heritage that he left. A war had killed his mother, and another war would shorten the days of his son. Meanwhile, the streets were decked with purple, and even the children were dressed in black. A nine-year reign was beginning, in which our own little hero was to reach both heights and depths. But for all, as the sun shone and the clouds gathered, change would be coming fast. There could be no doubt whatever now that a new century was here.

This was a great season for the games and stories in Kensington Gardens, though the shade of Mr. Wilkinson's day-school in Orme Square was already looming over George. See Chapter XXIII of *The Little White Bird*, where under the thin disguise of Pilkington he is the object of as bitter and actionable an apostrophe as any private-schoolmaster has yet received. See also the frontispiece. Yes, George would be eight this July, and even before that the clock would strike and Pilkington or Wilkinson would seize his prey. But Jack was still safe, or at any rate no further than a kindergarten. And Peter, who had quite a gift for telling stories—though rather gruesome ones—himself, was coming on nicely as Number Three. Michael was there behind him; and though nobody knew this yet, Nicholas, the last and youngest of the five little Davieses, was less than three years away. No danger yet of Mr. Wilkinson carrying off his prisoners faster than they could be replaced. There was one, moreover, who would never be caught, and by this spring—though no one ever discovered his real age—he had quietly acquired his name.

So quietly that not even George could remember when he had first heard it. There was a boy, it seemed, in these Gardens, or sometimes in the woods at Black Lane, who was so well known that of course you must always have known of him too. He had slipped into those long and elaborate serials so softly and gently that somehow he had never been a stranger, and no listener would now dream of asking why he was called Peter Pan. He just was; and he rode on a goat, and played on pan-pipes—naturally enough, with a name like that—and he knew the fairies, and had adventures in

which again, as it never occurred to them to question, the little Davieses also took part. Pan, then, no doubt, because the boy lived in the open and was at least half an immortal. Peter for alliteration, because the name was running in his creator's mind, and for the same deliberately confusing sort of reason which had credited the third little Davies with the authorship of *The Greedy Dwarf*.

Once and for all, though, the two Peters were no more the same character than Peter Pan was George, or Jack, or presently Michael and Nicholas. All these little boys grew up with, and in due course ceased to believe in, the same invisible companion. But Peter Pan was much more like Barrie than any of them, and their own contributions to the saga, if added together and then multiplied a thousandfold, could never have produced the imaginatively triumphant figure who will outlive them all. Of course they helped. It was they, but mostly the three elder ones, who fetched back old memories, and must always be told new stories, and by listening and at any rate half-believing, made the whole saga grow. Their background became its background, with only the faintest echo now from Dumfries where it had all begun. They weren't exactly conscious critics, but they had to be satisfied, and if they weren't—though this wasn't very often—then that part of the saga would be dropped. For, as in all sagas, there were favourite scenes which had to be repeated, and the narrator was immediately corrected if he left out something which he had forgotten or overlooked. This, no doubt, was collaboration in a sense, and the narrator was careful to take note of it. But the real invention and the method of relation were utterly and entirely his own. The little Davieses had set him going and were keeping him at it, but even they knew now that nobody else, at home, in the Gardens, or anywhere on earth, could ever tell stories like these.

On and on they went, this year, next year, and for long after that. Each little Davies in turn became a listener and a character in them at the same time. Other children heard bits of them, and were sometimes thrilled to discover that they had become characters, and had therefore had these extraordinary adventures, too. Peter Pan wasn't always a protagonist, for he was elusive even in this endless epic, but he was there oftener than not, and all that was afterwards written of him was only a fraction of what the little Davieses were told. They wouldn't and couldn't remember everything, but when the time came for them to read *The Little White Bird* or to see the

play, they must have been conscious that the whole body of accumulated legend had still hardly been touched.

There was little if any feminine interest in the stories at first. Margot Meredith, Pia Hewlett, and other little girls were sometimes allowed to flit across the scene, and Mary Hodgson, the Davieses' young and incorruptible nurse, occasionally turned up—though somewhat translated—on a desert island or, it might be, at the bottom of a mine. But there was never any nonsense about a heroine. It was the novelist who made Miss Maimie Mannerling so important, and the playwright who developed and was then carried away by Wendy.

Both were still busily at work. *The Little White Bird*, which had never wavered from this title, was covering a good deal more paper. But as yet there was no Peter or Maimie, for all their chapters burst into it later, though the notion of incorporating old articles was already part of the plan. In this spring of 1901 it was just the story which ends, to all intents and purposes, before fairies are mentioned at all. The story, very much in the first person again, of the sentimental Captain W— (as if even this military rank could for a moment mislead us), of the Little Nursery Governess, and of the boy David—an equally apt title for this part of it—who in the notes is still so often called George. It was to be a short book, shorter even than *Margaret Ogilvy*; but then even short books must have an end as well as a beginning, and this, as the author still fumbled for it and couldn't quite reach it, was how his pen again slid off on its own. An early reference to Kensington Gardens had been its cue, and now, at the first sign of hesitation on the part of its owner, it broke loose and nothing could hold it back. It was as strong on the lead as Porthos himself, and George (or David) was virtually forgotten as the stories which he had been told insisted on taking his place. Complete breakdown of any pretence that this was a novel now. Somehow, no doubt, the last chapter or so could be made to pick up what had been dropped. But the whole, long section which was subsequently re-issued, with the Arthur Rackham illustrations, as *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, would have to do what it wanted first.

This, then, would be part of the task—though that isn't altogether the right word for it—as the year went on. But "Phcebe's Garden" was moving forward too. And the notes show that other ideas were already seeing how they liked a page or two, and some ounces of

tobacco, and one or more walks. "Napoleonic Wars play." No; on second thoughts not. Or keep it for "Phœbe's Garden." "The Thrums Fairy Tales." No; postpone this, at any rate, until the end of *The Little White Bird*. "Fairy Play." A lot of notes here, but more for incidents than for anything that can be called a plot. "Should Literary Men Wear a Uniform?" Thirty-five entries in a row—most of them impudent and funny—but somehow they stopped at that. It must be at least Easter by now, and the change from pencil to ink suggests a little more thought and care.

"Irene Play—"The Smart Set?" Seven pages, but hardly a scenario. The acts overlap, there are gaps and vaguenesses. The younger Miss Vanbrugh isn't, as a matter of fact, going to get very much out of this. But her time is coming. And though her name isn't actually mentioned on the next page, for the whole of the rest of the notebook *The Admirable Crichton* comes pouring out as fast, it seems, as the author can write.

What is more, he has got the whole plot at the very first attempt. There it is, in the same four acts that are now known so well. Each a little thinner still, as he hurries to get it all down. But the moment he reaches the end, he is off again with more and more details, and on every page now it is getting more like its final form. At first it is called "The Island." Then "The Case is Altered," and as this it will remain for many months yet. But the point is that luck and cunning, this time, have played completely into each other's hands. No doubts about the ending. No dangerous first act, with a sequel still to be hammered out, or to be dragged in from somewhere else. In *The Admirable Crichton*, and only once more—but then much less clearly—Barrie saw the whole story and the whole shape in one lightning glance. No need for carpentry or improvisation this time. The dialogue would have nothing to conceal or disguise, except, like all stage dialogue, its subtle distinction from dialogue in real life. The action could be as ingenious or as strange as he liked, but there was no fear, either, that it and not the essential points that it was connecting would come out on top. As full-length plays by a playwright *Crichton* (as the profession would come to call it) and *Dear Brutus* are the only two which are models of construction as well as everything or anything else. Curious, perhaps, because they weren't exactly constructed, and it was the others that were built up bit by bit. But the work and care that went into them—plenty enough of both—were all part of the design. They're real plays as well as

real Barrie. He found them whole in the box—though for a time he thought *Dear Brutus* too slender—instead of in pieces; and somehow one feels the rare and remarkable assurance that he couldn't have spoilt them even if he had tried.

*Quality Street*, *Crichton*, *The Little White Bird*—all going ahead at once now, but the first well in front; so nearly finished, indeed, that Frohman had already recognised another vehicle for Miss Adams, and was planning to send her off in it in the autumn. No definite arrangements as yet, though, for London. If it were a success in New York, then Frohman would almost certainly have a hand in its production here. But though Barrie was his friend now, they hadn't quite reached the stage where everything must be put on in both countries at once. Meanwhile, Barrie himself wanted Cyril Maude and Miss Emery again. And a little later they had their chance. But the heroine in *Quality Street* has so many tricks played with her real and apparent age that Miss Emery, though still under forty in private life, felt strongly that a younger actress would be safer and much more comfortable in the part. Her husband agreed with her; so *Quality Street* wouldn't go to the Haymarket, and just where it would go must remain for a while uncertain and unknown.

Cricket again. Another challenge from Abbey and his artists. At this match the two captains made four runs apiece, but as Doyle was back with the Allahakbarries, scored 91, and took eight wickets, it was literature that gained the day. Later there would come the second annual festival at Black Lane. But that won't be till July; and meanwhile look what the Barries have done.

They've bought a car; which in June, 1901, was so startling and dashing that for the moment their friends who heard of it could hardly speak of anything else. They were pioneers, in fact, for quite a number of the friends had still never ridden in a car at all, and there was a thrill of admiration and slight terror as it trundled along the roads. It was built like a dog-cart—if anyone should still remember how dog-carts were built—was very high off the ground, and had neither wind-screen nor hood. But it wasn't top-heavy, for the motive power was steam, and the boiler was slung somewhere under the seats. It was steered by a tiller, and the pressure-gauge, which projected on the off-side, could be examined either in a small mirror or by leaning out and looking under your right arm. So silently did it move—that is to say, when it moved at all—

that warning of its approach was given by a melodious bell, which you rang by stamping on a knob. It was, in fact, the precise model which Kipling describes in his short story, *Steam Tactics*, and like that counterpart was an extremely unreliable method of covering even a modicum of miles.

A chauffeur, named Alfred, came with it, yet actually, when it was behaving itself, the driving took very little skill. No clutch. No gears. If the water could once be induced to boil, you just opened the throttle and away you went, at any speed up to twenty or, downhill, even twenty-five miles an hour. So both the Barries drove it, and broke down in it, and had punctures in it, and were somehow fortunately preserved from being blown to bits by it. It retired in the winter, of course—for never was a car less suited to bad weather—but it was out again next summer, and might, if it hadn't been supplanted, have glided through Surrey for even longer than that. But though Barrie liked it, because it was a toy, and rather an absurd toy, and in practice was very little use, Mrs. Barrie seems to have noticed how often now it was being overtaken and how much less anxious and wind-blown the other motorists were beginning to look. So the steam-car vanished and a Lanchester and a new chauffeur (called Frederick) took its place. Then there was the second Lanchester, and later still the Fiats and the third chauffeur, Alphonse. And the South-Western Railway no longer took her to and fro between London and Black Lane, for times were changing, money was pouring in, and cars, for those who could afford them, were part of the ordinary background of life.

But Barrie never really shared this view. His steam-car had been an innocent and not even very expensive joke. But the Lanchesters and the Fiats he insisted on regarding as signs of ostentation, and he never willingly went in any of them if he could walk or take a train or cab. They were his wife's toys, like the Black Lake garden, in which she was showing more quickness and cleverness every year. He viewed them still, and obstinately, from something of the Grenville Street standpoint. They were extravagances, or perhaps, to be even more accurate, they were the kind of extravagance with which he could dispense himself. He was simple, you see. He needed nothing, except what he wanted and immediately set out to obtain. Yet the cars, if not the garden, were undoubtedly another contribution to the gradual, miserable drifting apart.

In the last phase Barrie just hated all cars. It was they—and who

would care to deny it?—that had changed and spoilt the world in which he had grown up, they slaughtered thousands, and they stood for all the rottenness and restlessness that he loathed. He convinced himself that coroners and their juries were composed exclusively of corrupt road-hogs, and that Buffaloes, Oddfellows, Foresters and even Freemasons were perpetually conspiring to let each other off. He still took taxis, and still tolerated and even hired such other vehicles as necessity or convenience compelled. But a memory of him waving and wobbling at the tiller of that steam dog-cart is no forecast of what would happen when the roads began to be tarred.

At the end of July the entire Llewelyn Davies family—six of them—came down into the very near neighbourhood, to a farmhouse at Tilford, where they stayed for about six weeks. So near (which was of course the whole point of it) that they and the Barries could meet daily, and all the games and stories from Kensington Gardens were immediately resumed in the pine-woods and on the shores of the Black Lake. Michael—the one who would always look most like his mother—was still in a perambulator, and Peter was still snatched away for his midday rest, but Barrie and at least two little Davieses were inseparable, wet or fine. There were frequent if short expeditions in the steam-car, but for the most part they were in the woods, or the house, or the garden, and more than ever now, with fewer interruptions, the serial adventures weren't only described, but were lived. Fairies, pirates, and Red Indians surrounded them. The Black Lake was a South-Sea lagoon. Porthos, who accompanied them everywhere, was obliging enough to represent a number of far more ferocious animals. They were explorers. They were being wrecked. They had been wrecked, and were building themselves a hut. They were in deadly peril, and there wasn't one of them who didn't believe it at the moment, but then—of course, and by one ingenious method or another—they were all saved. To-morrow they would all be at it again, with Barrie as ring-leader and the children so bewitched and bewildered that they would accept him as three different characters, if necessary, in ten minutes. A pause while Peter is removed. Sudden, irresistible impulse on the part of the ring-leader to give his old imitation of Irving in *The Bells*. Back into the woods again, and into something as near fairy-land as most children have ever met. Games in the garden. Games



at the farmhouse. Arthur Davies a little worried by some of them, but quite incapable of removing the spell. Sylvia smiling, accepting it all, amused by it all, but under no real form of enchantment herself. Mrs. Barrie looking remarkably pretty, fond of the whole family, standing for a certain steadiness and efficiency—for after all there must be meals and other arrangements whether Peter Pan is in the woods or not—but never for a moment trying to spoil the fun. A happy, crowded, care-free summer holiday—the best, perhaps, of them all; for if Barrie is besotted with these boys and his games, if sometimes his single-minded concentration on them is really a little excessive and alarming, no one again can stop him, and he is obviously so gloriously happy, too. And so kind. So funny. And only juggling with his own age. Never, as even the boys' father must realise, attempting to hold them back from growing into men. Fairies or no fairies the ethics of courage and sportsmanship are an inseparable part of every story and escapade.

He still had his camera with him this summer, and used it a great deal. As he studied the prints, when the holiday was all over, another idea was seized; and just as, seven years ago, he had made that little book with the photographs of Bevil Quiller-Couch, now he was going to do the same thing, but far more thoroughly, in honour of the Davies boys. Once more W. B. Laikie of Constable's was called in for printing and binding, and two copies of *The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island* were prepared by the end of the year. Peter is again the alleged author, but this time Barrie allows himself to be the publisher. The cover exactly resembles the kind of work that was also being burlesqued; there is a frontispiece, a dedication "To Our Mother, In Cordial Recognition of her Efforts to Elevate Us above the Brutes," a preface in mock-imitation of other adventure-stories, and then follow the sixteen chapter headings. But no chapters. Just thirty-five more photographs—of little boys in berets, linen breeches, and long stockings, or of the same little boys bathing, and of Porthos, alone or beside them—each with an apparent fragment of the missing text, in the same style as the preface. So that it is a tantalising as well as an elaborate sort of joke.

As the volume is described at some length in the dedicatory introduction, seventeen years later, to the published version of *Peter Pan*, there is no need for any further account of it here; except perhaps to add that for all its foreshadowings of the Never, Never, Never

Land (a name which was gradually reduced until only one Never remained), there is no mention of Peter Pan himself. His spirit is somewhere in every picture and between every line, but his story, it seems, was still being reserved for *The Little White Bird*. Lucky little Davieses again, whether they were beginning to realise that their playfellow was a famous figure or not. They pored over this tribute to their importance; they still weren't quite sure whether the pirates and all the rest of it had been real or not; but here they were in a real book, and what could be more exciting or flattering than that?

Nothing. And of course this was the actual author's intention, quite as much as to amuse himself and their parents, and at the same time to feel a secret triumph over all the faithful readers and playgoers, not to mention the newspapers, who would never catch so much as a glimpse of the work at all. However, one doesn't absolutely know about that, for almost the first thing that happened was that Arthur Davies left one of the two copies in a train, and no word has been heard of it from that day to this. Did the finder take it away, keep it, sell it, or what was its fate? It just vanished. Only the remaining copy is known to have survived, and now the photographs have begun fading, or shadows seem to be creeping over them from the sides. The little boys look so happy, and intent, and absorbed in the magic which they only partly understood; and somehow, also, so very, very far away.

"Chapter XVI. Concluding Remarks—Advice to Parents about the bringing up of their Children." The last joke in that table of non-existent contents. But the advice, whatever it might have been, could hardly have bettered the fascinating experiences of George, Jack, and Peter Davies in the summer of 1901.

So again they all returned to London. The Davieses to their new house, across the street from the old one, at 23, Kensington Park Gardens; George to his daily toil at Wilkinson's; and the Barries, once more, to Gloucester Road. Once more, also, Porthos—who was nearly seven and a half now—watched from the sofa in the study over the front door, as his master made more and more notes for the play about the island, and smoked his way through the fairy chapters of *The Little White Bird*. Still, too, the great dog lay under the dining-room table at meals. And sometimes he even rose and wrestled, or went through his other old tricks, though he seemed

to be getting slower and more and more indifferent on his walks. But he had never really been strong since his master and mistress had left him to go to America, and though no dog was ever more loved or less neglected, St. Bernards are seldom long-lived. Something would have to be faced before the summer was here again. A day would come when the only real kindness would be to grant him a gentle release. This, then, though he will linger for some months yet, must be our farewell to the noble Porthos. He lives on—though there was another dog in his place when it was published—in the pages of *The Little White Bird*; and though it was the other dog whose coat and mask were copied for Nana in *Peter Pan*, it was Porthos who inspired this character too. The Barries had had his portrait painted in oils, when he was still in his prime, and this picture, though hidden away for years, will emerge presently and stand on the long window-sill in the second Adelphi flat. Poor Porthos, he looks so gaunt already in the photographs in *The Boy Castaways*. But sadness, as all who know them must realise, is inseparable from any kind of intimate association with a dog.

In October *Quality Street*, starring Miss Adams, was given its first public performance in Toledo, Ohio. Frohman was there, of course, and according to his biographers felt impelled, after a day or two, to make some changes in the third act. It is this act, undoubtedly, that goes as near tearing the gossamer as any such comedy can stand, demanding as it does that the audience should accept what they can't conceivably believe. It is a point where Barrie obviously stuck, hesitated, saved himself by desperate effrontery, and then went back and used all his skill to try and conceal what he had done. Yet whatever Frohman altered or cut, both he and Toledo were more than satisfied with the results. The play reached New York—where he was responsible for eighteen productions this year—on November 11th, opened there at the Knickerbocker Theatre, and again was an immediate and immense success. It was a vehicle indeed for Miss Adams—no mistake having been made this time about giving her the largest and most consistently sympathetic part—and like *The Little Minister* it ran right through the season, with a handsome profit for all concerned. She didn't immediately go out with it on tour, for in the following season, owing to a mixture of temperament and appendicitis, she

vanished for a while from the boards. But later it became part of her regular repertoire, and she played in it all over America, off and on, for years.

At the moment, or in other words at the beginning of its long life, there can be no doubt that it was still pretty generally regarded as even more her triumph than the author's; a point of view which Frohman and his star system did little to upset. But there was no question now about a London production, though where and with what cast was still in doubt. Round about Christmas-time, however, the author took the little Davieses to the Vaudeville Theatre, where they all saw Seymour Hicks and Miss Ellaline Terriss in *Bluebell in Fairyland*, and the visit had more than one result.

In the first place this new and different kind of pantomime, which Hicks himself had devised, made as deep an impression on Barrie as on the children. He talked about it, thought about it, and acted bits of it in more than one nursery where younger or less fortunate children hadn't been taken to it themselves. He was the crossing-sweeper—Hicks's part—he was Bluebell, the little flower-girl, and then, with special and overwhelming effect, he was the terrifying Sleepy King. The story became involved for a while with his own stories, and as it did so, a new and an old determination became more and more fixed in his mind. He wanted to write a fairy play for children, too. The decision went deep down inside him, stayed there, for a while produced little more than a sprinkling of odd notes. But it never left him, and presently it would be coming up again, with all that it had collected, and the notes would again be growing into dialogue, and scenes, and acts. Eight years afterwards, when Maeterlinck was in London for Herbert Trench's production at the Haymarket of *The Blue Bird*, he came to call on Barrie in the Adelphi, picked up a pencil, and wrote—as it would seem that the great men are privileged to do—on the wallpaper over the mantelpiece in the first of the two flats. And when the tenant moved up to the next floor, the little inscription was scraped off and framed. "Hommage d'admiration," it ran, "au père de 'Peter Pan', grandpère de 'l'oiseau bleu.'" But Seymour Hicks, though you mightn't think it to look at him, had undoubted claims to be an ancestor of both.

That, then, was one result. The other was the realisation that Miss Terriss had all the youth, charm, beauty, and skill that were needed for Phœbe Throssel in *Quality Street*, that her husband had all the

dash and sparkle for the part of Valentine Brown, and that if the same idea hadn't already occurred to Frohman, then it should be laid before him without much more delay. That it was an extremely sound idea in any case would presently receive the very best kind of proof. Not yet, though. Not for nearly nine months, in fact—for *Bluebell in Fairyland*, abbreviated to *Bluebell* and with the childish element less stressed, ran right through to the end of June. And just now there must be another note of sadness, in the last days of 1901.

Barrie's sister Isabella, or Bella, or Mrs. Murray, who was only two years older than he was, died—distressingly if not unexpectedly—at the end of December, and though he had seen little of her since his marriage, memories and the family feeling were still strong. Only forty-three, she left five children—a son and four daughters—of whom even the eldest was barely grown-up. So Barrie went down to the funeral at Bristol, and met his doctor brother-in-law again; and remembered also those weeks of dangerous illness at Kirriemuir, and how the same brother-in-law had saved him. If there were anything that he could do now, to help in any kind of way— But there wasn't, it seemed. Or not yet. For Dr. Murray still had his practice, and was far less conscious of the existence of any debt. About six years later, when he too was taken ill and died, Barrie showed his customary generosity—though complicated as always by a vast vagueness in business matters, and a powerful determination to be generous in his own way—and to some of the children the debt was fully repaid. Absolutely no doubt about that.

1902. The last year in Gloucester Road. *Quality Street* still running merrily in America. *The Little White Bird* as good as finished. "The Case is Altered"—but the butler is still called Graves, and the inspiration which will give both him and the play their final name still lingers—in a sense is as good as finished, too. Yet ideas for it still flow, for once the author is on an island there is no end to them, and he goes on adding, altering, putting things in and taking them out again, until the study is filled with corrected drafts. No one can say, though this part of the job is almost pure enjoyment, that the author is avoiding work. An essence is coming out of it all which is the true essence; the story still stands firm, and though the detail is becoming richer and richer, it is never too extravagant for the story.

The last act is now the main trouble, as it will presently be for critics who aren't altogether carried away by the first three. Is it weak? Is there too much reaction? Yet this part of the plot was fixed and implicit from the beginning, and reaction after the scenes on the island is just what he means and wants. Fourth acts, in the days of four-act plays—yet if it comes to that, third acts when the convention changes—must always be a special problem. Here was one with an essential development; not really an appendage or afterthought; but the higher the equally essential climax just before it, the flatter it was bound to appear. Flatness, indeed, was the whole point of it; yet the audience must still be interested and amused. So the last act would be tackled again and again, and its last moments, especially, be tried with every kind of twist and turn; and this will go on even after Frohman has come over and read it, and has seen, with a moment of disappointment, no vehicle for Miss Adams, yet at the next moment a play which he loves and admires for its own sake.

For Frohman is now infected with islands, too. He doesn't look very romantic, but Barrie has talked to him, and put the old spell on him, and his eyes glitter as he sees one magic background after another, though still and always in terms of the stage. He can spread himself this time, and means to spread himself, for the theatre is so much his beloved toy that he would always rather put on an expensive play than a cheap one. That's the kind of manager or madman that he is. Boucicault shall be as extravagant as he likes. The island must be the best island that has ever been seen. So real that Frohman can be lost in it himself.

That, again, would be some time in April, but there has been little but work, friends, and Kensington Gardens for Barrie since the beginning of the year. In February, at the instance of his friend Anthony Hope, and once more with the support of Lord Rosebery, he was elected as a "person of distinguished eminence" to the Athenæum, under its impressive Rule II. Of course he had to pretend that it meant nothing to him, but of course it was an honour and he knew it. Not that he ever did much more here than pay his annual subscription.

In February, also, he would have gone down to Meredith for his birthday, because he always did. With Mrs. Barrie, too, of course, whom Meredith liked so much, because of her quickness and prettiness, and because—though perhaps he didn't know there was

another reason—she wasn't afraid of him. And it was in this spring that there was another, special meeting. The Barries dined one evening with the Hewletts, at their house in Northwick Terrace, and there were E. V. and Elizabeth Lucas. E. V., thirty-three, a publisher's reader, journalist, essayist, anthologist, and on the point of joining the staff of *Punch*. His beautiful, soft-voiced, kind, clever wife helped him with all these qualities and others too. There was a feeling at once that this was the beginning of a friendship, and indeed it was, through all that must happen before the end. E. V. had so much that Barrie admired. Wit that was too keen and authentic for jealousy. An incredible memory for the incredible amount that he had read. A dry, sympathetic, and flattering sense of fun. An encyclopædic knowledge and love of cricket. "E. V. Lucas is the only man I've met of late years that I specially took to. You would like him." This was the kind of tribute that would presently flash into the middle of a letter, and though Mrs. Lucas's case was less exceptional—or less exceptional at first—the friendship and affection here would become just as close. Presently, also, and soon enough, their daughter Audrey—a year younger than Peter Davies and two years older than Michael—would be well inside the magic circle; and Barrie would be showing again that he couldn't only play games with little boys.

Yes, something very particular in all this, and for many years. Help and understanding on both sides. Something on which all could sharpen their minds. So much still for laughter and funny letters. Lucas's enormous and industrious output was just what Barrie approved, for it reminded him—though of course there was a difference in both depth and shallowness—of his own. Always, as one knows now, Lucas's great gifts must fall short of his ambition. Something must slip as he came so near to genius himself, and it was this knowledge and disappointment, perhaps, that ended by confusing and tangling his life. His novels, which meant so much to him, never quite came off. He wanted to write plays, and there was Barrie encouraging him and trying to help him all the time; yet again the one had the luck and the spark and the amazing success, while the other must continue to struggle and fail. There will be a lot of Lucas now, more almost than of anyone, as it all goes on. He will give and take; he will forgive and be forgiven. He will change, too, even more than Barrie, as circumstance batters and twists them both. There will be a phase, as it will seem to some,

when he certainly isn't doing his friend and admirer very much good. And a final phase when they are still friends, and real friends, but with a kind of adjustment that is very different from the fresh and eager beginning. Yet they knew each other, as intimately as either knew any other man, for thirty-five years, and the Maurice Hewletts were responsible for something very important in this spring of 1902.

The Boer War was ending. Muddle and pride and the elusive De Wet had kept it going long after it should all have been over, but in March there was another attempt at negotiations, and at the end of May the Peace Treaty was signed. It would be two more years before the income tax fell back to a shilling. But we'd won. The distant cloud had lifted. The new reign and the new century were to be glorious and prosperous after all. There was a feeling of renascence in which even the Liberals shared, though few of them can actually have suspected how soon and decisively the electoral pendulum was to swing their way. Not at all a bad season in any case for an author with two forthcoming plays. Bright read *Quality Street* to Hicks and his wife, with such emotional artistry, it is said, that they were both reduced to tears. They were engaged for it, for autumn production at the Vaudeville, under the joint management of Frohman and the Gatti brothers, who owned the lease. And *Crichton*, with everything in the way of cast and mounting that money could provide, was to follow it a little later at the Duke of York's.

With these hopeful auguries in the background, the Allahak-barries again got out their bats and pads. In the middle of May they were playing the artists once more. Early in June, reinforced by some new members, including J. C. Snaith, the novelist, Walter Frith, and two Cambridge Blues—though only one of them was a cricketer—they took part in a two-day contest against the Royal Engineers at Chatham, and were beaten by ten wickets. In July there was to be another long week-end at Black Lake, and a match at Shackleford against an eleven got up by W. E.—afterwards Sir Edgar—Horne.

Summer, in fact, was here again. But it brought something else now, as well as cricket, and Frohman, and plans for the two plays. Mrs. Barrie had been house-hunting, for the second time in London, had found what she wanted, and workmen were once more papering and painting and following her other instructions as hard as



they could. The seven years in Gloucester Road were ending, and though the house was certainly still large enough, she had done all she could with it and wanted to do more. At seven years the lease could be broken, and with any sort of restlessness there is always the temptation to read this as a sign. No difficulty, it was quite obvious, about the money side of it. Nothing marked in the way of opposition or support from her husband, in which, perhaps, he was for once more like other husbands than not. A faint or occasionally emphatic distaste for the extravagance, but no real resistance, in this kind of matter, to any accomplished fact. If it pleased her, if she had made up her mind, and if she took all the trouble, then nothing much more was to be said. And so it was settled.

The seven years and all that had happened in them seemed suddenly and strangely clear in the last few weeks, though the feeling would soon begin to fade. It wasn't true that there had ever been poverty here, as it was another temptation to believe; yet something had been different at first. More innocence, perhaps; more happiness; more hope. . . .

Seven years? For a moment they all rose up at once. That dreadful journey, almost at the outset, from Switzerland to Kirriemuir. Porthos and his toys. America. The accident at the Haymarket. Cable's visit. Broadway. Beechwood. Rustington. Black Lake. *The Greedy Dwarf*. Colds, servants, friends, tradesmen, dinner-parties, more and more money, and more and more outward success. Now the men were coming to take the furniture, and no one could stop them or put back the clock. Gloucester Road was finished and done with. Seven years, or seven minutes, once they were gone it was just the same in the end. Or perhaps this change would mean a fresh and better start after all. It might. It might be just what was needed, and there was no reason why anyone should take it as a sign of defeat. Nothing of the sort. Another step upwards and onwards. Look at it in that way, which was of course how others were looking at it, and see if it wasn't really a second chance.

In London it is curiously unusual for those who have lived for any length of time on one side of the Park to uproot themselves so completely as to settle on the other. Barrie, of course, with his early lodgings in Bloomsbury and off Oxford Street had in a sense defied the custom already. And again there had been a kind of neutral standpoint in that autumn on Campden Hill. However,

everyone knew how often the Barries and the Llewelyn Davieses were meeting, and what friends they had become, so that no one was particularly surprised, in June, 1902, to learn that both families were now entering Kensington Gardens from the north. In *The Little White Bird*, which was now in turn on the point of being serialised in *Scribner's*, it is clear, indeed, that the author had come to regard himself as a northerner even before the move.

## 17

The new house, a low, two-storeyed building with a front and back garden, was at the corner of Leinster Terrace, facing the Bayswater Road. Regency, one would say. It and its semi-detached companion would have belonged, no doubt, to comfortably situated merchants or men of business, and perhaps at that time the whole of the north side of Kensington Gardens, and of Hyde Park as well, was fringed with such unpretentious little residences. Now only a few remained, and Leinster Corner—as Mrs. Barrie had decided to call it—seemed smaller than ever in comparison with the adjacent and mammoth Victorian mansions in Lancaster Gate. She had it whitewashed, which gave it more than ever an air of semi-rural simplicity. And other clever things she did, both inside and out, to brighten it and make it gay. The little front garden was entered from the side turning. At the foot of the back garden, with another entrance from the same street, there was an old stable—shortly to become a garage—and the room over it was cleared out, and cleaned, and painted, and turned into Barrie's new study.

The house itself was certainly no larger than 133, Gloucester Road, but had more character to start with, and far more character by the time Mrs. Barrie had done. From the upper windows you looked straight across the main road, in which there was still so little traffic by day and hardly any by night, to the railings, and then to the trees and green vistas of the Gardens which they both knew so well. Due south. Only a couple of hundred yards to the nearest gate. There was everything to be said for that.

The Little White House. That was how it struck you from the other side of the railings. And here, while still hardly settled, and still making fresh discoveries to the north, and east, and west, Barrie was now summoning his faithful cricketers for the forthcoming

match at Black Lake. That was the plan. To move down there at the beginning of July, and to stay until rehearsals started. But this year there was to be no more cricket after all.

Two months ago his father, now eighty-seven, had returned from Edinburgh to Kirriemuir. The advance-guard of another move. The plan here was that he, his daughter Sara, and his brother-in-law Dr. Ogilvy, should leave Edinburgh for good, and set up house again, when all had been made ready, in Strath View. So David Barrie had arrived already, and was pottering about in the High Street, when he was knocked down by a horse and cart. And was picked up again, and seemed so little the worse—for he was old and a little misty now, but there was no sign of anything more than shock—that everyone fully expected him to go on pottering, in a day or two, as actively as before. But he didn't. He just lay there in bed. Still it was thought that this was merely the way he was taking it, in his now rather senile state, and of course if anything else had been imagined his younger son would have been up there at once. But the unsuspected truth was that the inner spring had no more strength in it. There was no other reason why he shouldn't have recovered. But he was dying.

He died on June 26th. The Barries went up for the funeral and brought Dr. Ogilvy and Sara back with them to Black Lake. There could be no cricket, nor thought of cricket, in a house like this. Scotch gloom filled it, and no one for a while must exhibit anything else. Barrie sat writing letters to his friends, some of whom had not unnaturally feared that this was going to be as bad for him as when he lost his mother. But in fact, there was no comparison. "My father," he kept on writing, "was certainly the kind of Scotchman that I admire the most." That was true, and there must have been plenty to admire. Character, piety, industry, a dogged, Scottish determination to rise by his own efforts, and to see, if possible, that his children rose further still. No doubt that one of them had risen so far as to pass right out of the world which he understood. But even if he hadn't, there had never been the deeper sympathy by which they could read each other's thoughts. They were relations, with forty-five years between them, and of course resemblances could always be traced, but there it had begun and ended. This son had always put his mother first, and no father in the world could share a pedestal as high and as holy as that.

What Dr. Ogilvy and his adopted daughter thought of the luxury,

as it must have seemed to them, of the cottage near Farnham, or how often they wondered why they had come here, nobody knows. But presently they must be leaving, to take up their residence again at Strath View, and one may doubt whether any great pressure was put on them to stay. Most of the cloud went with them. Nobody noticed that Barrie's fits of melancholy were any darker or more frequent than before. He was polishing up *Crichton*. He bought himself a new bicycle, for though the steam dog-cart was still gliding about—in more amiable moods—the Davieses were expected at Tilford again in August, and on any joint expedition there must always be outriders as well.

August, then. More games and stories in the garden and pine-woods. George Davies was nine now, and had discovered, perhaps at Wilkinson's, that the story-teller not only wrote real plays—which he may have gathered already—but was paid for them. He was impressed, and passed the knowledge on. No, you couldn't call it the end of his or his brothers' innocence; yet already some of the make-believe could only go to the old lengths with Peter. No turning—indeed not!—from the older ones, and George, who had started it all, was in a position that he never would lose. Yet observers couldn't help noticing that as the boys went on growing up, so much of Barrie could still do nothing of the sort. They were beginning to pass him. Presently, in a sense they would meet him again, and discover more things about him, and so—but with a difference—the strange relationship would be resumed. Even now, when a game fell flat or a story suddenly met with more or less courteous doubt, he was proud rather than abashed. For this was the manliness that he, also, was determined to foster and approve. They snubbed him sometimes—unthinkingly, of course—and he was almost as delighted (but should he have been?) as if some special compliment had been paid. And there was still Michael, still in a perambulator, and for him all the fairies and pirates could be born again.

By the end of the month rehearsals had begun at the Vaudeville, and Barrie was up in London most days in the week. To the cast of *Quality Street* had been added Miss Marion Terry, as the elder Miss Throssel, and Miss Rosina Filippi, as Patty, the maid. Also, in the small part of the recruiting-sergeant, our old friend George Shelton, though still in ignorance of his ultimate fate as Smee. There was no outside producer this time, for Boucicault still stuck to the Duke of York's. Barrie and Seymour Hicks took all the rehearsals, with Hicks

full of ideas, of course, but with Barrie in effective command. Still there was the leisureliness of the period, the slow and careful building up of detail; and in addition the feeling that a play which had already succeeded in America, and could now rely on Miss Ellaline Terriss's enormous and devoted public, had every promising augury on its side.

A feeling to be taken by the author, as usual, with calm and every kind of understatement. But he was enjoying himself, and could hug another thought. That when these rehearsals were over, more rehearsals would be starting almost at once. To have two plays running in London was certainly, if secretly, good reason for a glow; but to sit smoking in the stalls, and interjecting advice, and captaining successive companies for the best part of three months on end, that was the real way to live. Prowling again, murmuring in dark corners, appearing suddenly with odd but insistent little suggestions, conducting the customary, the one-sided, the occasionally bewildering and slightly alarming flirtation with Miss Terriss; showing Miss Terry, perhaps just a little too clearly, the special homage reserved for women older than himself; picking out favourites among the children. Raising one paralysing eyebrow at Seymour Hicks whenever he was a little too funny. Being a tyrant when he felt like it, and then pretending that something which he had achieved by endless patience and cunning had now nothing whatever to do with him. Vanishing, very likely, when he was particularly wanted, but never out of sight or hearing if anyone thought to trick him by playing a scene in their own way.

Mrs. Barrie was at most of the rehearsals now, and to say that she didn't help—though immediate gratitude wasn't always forthcoming—would be very unfair indeed. Her quick eye missed even less, perhaps, than her husband's, and though there were those who still found her rather abrupt, she added something that would always be missed when she was gone. She didn't, in fact, believe in too much nonsense. She was clever enough to appreciate it, to be amused by it, to see its full value and full point. But she, and not always Barrie, was the one who knew when there had been enough. Then, it might be, she was a little abrupt again, and something was quietly dropped. No harm done. Quite the contrary. Even Frohman, until loyalty and shock suddenly blinded him, was well aware of that.

Sylvia Davies was in front sometimes; and others, but not quite

so often, as the play gradually took shape. Scenery and further help with the period by young Edwin Lutyens; reliable costumes from a reliable costumier; some tuneful incidental music by Walter Slaughter—who had collaborated in *Bluebell*—that was perhaps rather more of its own era than of a hundred years ago. But then so, if it actually came to that, was the author. He had devised a language which served its theatrical purpose, but he was no antiquary, and it was often much stranger and more mannered than anything in Jane Austen. All this, however, wasn't the point. His story was again a fairy-story, an essay in fantastic delicacy and charm, and the less it resembled anything in real life, the happier and easier any audience would be. For they weren't going to be antiquaries, either. They were going to laugh and smile at what they would instantly recognise as its old-fashioned fragrance, and swallow the improbabilities together with the occasional lumps in their own throats; for here was something fresh and kind-hearted and entertaining, neatly wrapped up in gentle mockery at a vanished if also a non-existent age. What more could they want? Nothing, when they were being given all this and Miss Ellaline Terriss as well.

So *Quality Street* opened at the Vaudeville Theatre on the evening of Wednesday, September 17th, 1902, and ran without a break until November 28th in the following year. An immediate and unquestioned success. Walkley, quoting French and Greek, welcomed it with hardly a word of criticism. William Archer called it a stage classic. The rest of the Press—and in those days, a whole column, was still considered the right length for these notices—hailed it with equal enthusiasm. *The Wedding Guest* was forgotten. This, said everyone, was the real Barrie, and so in a sense it was. It had been written, whatever the author might say afterwards, as a vehicle for Miss Adams, and under any kind of cold-blooded analysis one sees, again and again, how thoroughly and ingeniously this part of the job had been done. But of course there is the quality in *Quality Street* as well. The jokes, the little surprises, the touches of cunning and impudence, the whole idiosyncrasy incessantly at work. The fool-proof lines in which even amateurs could hardly have failed. The sentiment, carried to absurdity if you like, but waiting for its worst moments until nine-tenths of any audience is completely under the spell. A ridiculous story told with every artifice and hardly more than a pretence of sincerity, yet giving the public exactly what they

wanted and again at exactly the right moment. So up they rolled, and booked their tickets and spread the good news. The double success of *The Little Minister* was repeated, and again a long run in America was almost immediately followed by a long run at home. But this time Charles Frohman's name was on both programmes, and though *Crichton* was no use for Miss Adams—since apart from her temporary retirement she must always be more important than the hero—he was less inclined than ever to economise over its forthcoming presentation at the Duke of York's. *Carte blanche*. Full steam ahead. For Barrie, the fascinating companion who had taught him to play golf-croquet, had now reached a position where he counted for even more than a Frohman star.

A very enviable position indeed. An extraordinarily fortunate position in stage-land at this epoch. Again one can only gape and gasp at the mystery of Frohman's finances, which he never understood himself, and which seemed to defy every natural law that has yet been revealed. Alone or with other managers he put on twelve plays in New York this autumn, and had leased or joined in leasing five London theatres since the beginning of the year. Then there were the tours, all of which must constantly be remembered and watched. And the tremendous overhead of stars whom he had engaged and was paying, but who might or might not be earning their keep. And the lieutenants, dozens of them, all fitting into the intricate machinery, and all well-paid too. And the minor actors and actresses, hundreds of them this time, whom he had promised to take care of, who must come to him with all their troubles, and whom he would never in any circumstances fail. It was one of his great and glorious whims to conduct almost the entire business on the strength of his own word—after *Quality Street*, for instance, Barrie never had a written contract with him again—and though he never broke it, one can imagine how often the system must have added to the expense. For documents either have loopholes or allow for contingencies. But Frohman's promises seldom if ever stooped to anything like that.

So enormous sums of money flowed this way and that, and sometimes he was rich and sometimes he was poor, but in neither case would he dream of saving anything for himself. If he wanted cash—which he only wanted, though admittedly on a princely scale, for cigars, sweets, hotel bills, and travelling—he asked a lieutenant to give him or send him some. Seldom had any in his pocket, and

his London banker was the porter or cashier at the Savoy. Otherwise, everything must go back into the endless campaign for more plays, stars, authors, theatres, and all the rest of it. The swings weren't always balanced by the roundabouts; he lost just as many fortunes as he made; yet through all this chaotic and desperate existence—but he had chosen it and never wanted either peace or rest—he kept his pledges, paid his debts, and towered like Gibraltar or the Bank of England in a world still notorious for its shifting sands. Any faults? Only, to the hypercritical, that he didn't like plays to be depressing or dull. He didn't like them to be coarse or vulgar, either; but if they were fourth-rate or machine-made, if they were footling farces or meaningless musical comedies, his principles and enthusiasms had no sort of objection to that. He remained the average and slightly stage-dazzled playgoer, and well-known names—even when it was he who had made them well-known—never failed to give him a thrill. So sometimes his stars appeared in drivel, sometimes he got landed with an author who had already written his only success, and sometimes this method of backing his fancy resulted in triumph and glory for all concerned. Whatever happened, he was off at once on the next adventure, planning, scheming, turning over his mystical resources without a moment's delay. That was his life and he had no other. No faults, certainly, by these standards. A great and a very remarkable little man indeed.

Just as he had his favourites among players and playwrights, so there were two theatres which must now always come first. The Empire, on Broadway, which had been built for him, and the Duke of York's, in St. Martin's Lane, where he had first been a London manager on his own. The Empire was large and impressive; the smaller Duke of York's had a narrow, cramped stage, a plethora of pillars supporting its three circles, and no less than fourteen boxes plastered against its walls. But the same rule applied to both. These were his two main shop-windows, to be subsidised if necessary by box-offices elsewhere, and no production at either must ever fall short of the best that money could buy. Clearly, in these circumstances, the London theatre would have even less chance of making a profit. But that didn't matter. There was something sacred about the Duke of York's, whatever it swallowed or however little it disgorged. It was C. F.'s own, private, British National Theatre; he remained faithful to it until his death; and in choosing it for the production



of *The Admirable Crichton* he was paying the author the highest compliment in his power.

Not that he was there himself now, as Barrie—having first celebrated the success of *Quality Street* by a week of hospitable merry-making at Ramsgate—came creeping quietly in through the stage door. This was October, when Frohman was always in America. But here were the English lieutenants, even though the two chief ones had French names. William Lestocq, mystically in charge of the whole framework in London; and Dion Boucicault—the small and tireless—now well established as regent behind these footlights. Frohman hasn't given him a contract either, but he has been here for a year now, and will remain for another thirteen. He isn't the house-manager or the stage-manager, who are also there in the background; he produces, makes engagements, reads plays, darts over the Continent as Frohman's ambassador, organises, watches, disciplines, spares no one, and works like a demon himself. This is a pretty wonderful post that he's got, the best of its kind in England, but there's no doubt he's the best man for it. Frohman knows that, and Dot Boucicault knows it too. They trust each other completely, and both have the same end in view. They don't boast about the Duke of York's; they have merely given their hearts and souls to it; and this attitude, for each, is its own and richest reward.

Just behind Boucicault, or to the left, or to the right—or perhaps at this actual moment typing letters in his little office—we note the incomparable Miss Mabel Lillies. That's a theatrical name, too, though her best-known brother prefers to call himself Chudleigh. But Miss Lillies doesn't look theatrical. Anything but. She looks what she is; kindness, patience, and secretarial resourcefulness personified. One of the verybest of the team here. Everyone worships Miss Lillies, and Miss Lillies, like the rest of them, worships the Duke of York's. Like Sergeant Pink, the stage-doorkeeper. Or Duncan Macrae, the stage-manager. Or Lichfield Owen, his assistant. Or John Crook—"croak" would be a better name if you heard him speak—who conducts the orchestra and is presently going to write the music for *Peter Pan*. All these characters look up to Boucicault, and beyond him to the great Frohman, who has given them security and unfaltering support. All of them are ready to work till they drop for Barrie or, if it comes to that, for any other author who will give them the opportunity. That's why their names must come into these pages. They're all part of the good fortune which will attend him

now that chance and destiny have brought him to the Duke of York's too.

And here, of course, is Miss Irene Vanbrugh; married now, a star under her husband's direction and Frohman's management, also for the next thirteen years. There, undoubtedly, is another bit of Barrie's luck. Who else is at these rehearsals? H. B. Irving again—whom the profession calls Harry—still and always overshadowed by his own surname, but about to create, in the part of Bill Crichton, something that will lift that load of the Eycuum from his shoulders at last. And Henry Kemble—whom the profession call Beetle—the terror of the Garrick Club for his venomous wit, but superbly cast now as the Earl of Loam. And Gerald du Maurier, to add a charm of which there is no sign in the author's early notes, to the part of the Hon. Ernest Woolley. "Epigrammatic prig," say the notes, but Gerald can't leave it at that. He has got to be himself too, as he always remained, and again with no sort of disadvantage to Barrie as a successful playwright—this time for more than sixteen years. Frohman and Boucicault will be making him into a star too, before so very long, but here is one at least who will never quite share their feeling for the Duke of York's. There's an inner restlessness or recklessness that makes it impossible. Wherever it takes him, Gerald must always go his own way.

At the moment he is twenty-nine, and twisting his part a little, though he still does everything that Boucicault says. Improving it or making it more amusing, without doubt. His sister Sylvia is in the shrouded stalls again, smiling crookedly as all the careful preparations go on. Gerald comes and talks to her sometimes, but already he has an eye on someone else. That very pretty young actress, Miss Muriel Beaumont, who walked or ran on in *The Little Minister*, and is now playing the part of Lady Agatha Lazenby, one of the heroine's two sisters. Before the run of *Crichton* is over they will be engaged and married, and nothing better ever happened to the restless, reckless Gerald than that.

Weeks of rehearsing again, and for Barrie weeks of absorbing fun. For *Crichton* lends itself to elaboration and ingenuity of detail, and at no moment was any inspiration thought either too difficult or too expensive. The first and last acts, for instance, could easily have been played in the same set, and the script had never suggested anything else. Not good enough for Boucicault and Frohman and the Duke of York's. Two different rooms must be shown in Lord

Loam's London residence, and there was even a time—but somehow the plan fell through—when the family portraits in one of them were to have been painted by Sargent himself. That was the scale of the management's imagination, and when it came to the two middle acts on the island, tricks and realism both ran riot. This was Boucicault in his element, but it was a game that Barrie was enchanted to play too. A life-size toy theatre, with all its resources waiting for his approval or another flash of invention. Experts ready to add anything that he liked, or to take it away again if he happened to change his mind. *Quality Street*, whose success had been as good as assured, had missed the ultimate extravagance, because it wasn't at the Duke of York's. But *Crichton*, the untried venture, the play with a butler-hero and a heroine in breeches—either of which features in 1902 would have made most managers tremble with doubt—*Crichton* must have everything; and was getting it, from superfluous scenery to costly electrical effects, and from specially-built properties to dresses designed by the faithful and invaluable Bernard Partridge.

What if it failed? This was the thought that Boucicault must bury under his incessant labours; that the company must dodge—as they generally do—by fatalism or professional pluck; and that Barrie must hide, not for the first or last time, by smoking, by walking up and down at the side of the stalls, and by assuming the air of remote detachment which Hardy celebrated in a well-known fragment of verse.

If any day a promised play  
Should be in preparation,  
You never see friend J. M. B.  
Depressed or in elation.

But with a stick, rough, crooked and thick,  
You may sometimes discern him,  
Standing as though a mummy show  
Did not at all concern him.

That was written seventeen and a half years later, when Hardy was at the rehearsals of *Mary Rose*. But it was true, or superficially true, of all rehearsals. Sometimes, indeed, it looked as if he were just more or less mildly disgusted at finding himself in a theatre at all. He was

still here, though. He couldn't carry it to the point of keeping away. And somehow, also, though he turned aside to light his pipe, or his wanderings took him as far away as the back of the pit, he was still the one whom the company wanted to please. It was a very impressive little figure of ill-dressed world-weariness that he had devised for these long hours of theatrical labour. For of course he was playing a very carefully-studied part himself.

*The Admirable Crichton*, which the programme described as "a fantasy," was produced on Thursday, November 4th; but only the Frohman tradition and Boucicault's invincible determination saved a postponement at the last moment. There was a strike of stage-hands, and Boucicault had to appeal to other theatres and borrow some of their heads of departments to get through the evening at all. It was done, but there was chaos behind the curtain, the intervals seemed endless, and in addition—which was actually much more Boucicault's fault—there was a painful delay at the opening of the second act, while Crichton went through the business of cutting some long grass, with no dialogue to help him or the audience out. It was at about this point, in fact, that the author left his wife and the Llewelyn Davieses in Box F, and decided to spend the rest of the evening in the street.

But though he may have spared himself something, and it was after midnight before the last curtain fell, there can be no further suspense for us in a matter of theatrical history now more than a generation ago. The audience hadn't lost patience. They stayed, laughed, applauded, shouted for the author, and were again informed—accurately on this occasion—that he wasn't in the house. A triumph in spite of the clock. Success for everyone, and for Barrie a further and special salvo from the Press. For the Press wouldn't have it that *Crichton* was a mere fantasy. It was bigger than that. It had put—though there was some difference of opinion as to whether it had answered—an important human and social problem. The Press chuckled at the fun and the Barrie-isms, but there was a new and genuine note of respect. The Press smelt politics, and morals, and all kinds of things which it hadn't hitherto associated with this astonishing playwright. Yet a bare summary of the plot alone was enough, in 1902, to startle the public into quick and profitable curiosity. Walkley (quoting French and Latin this time) repeated a rumour, which he seems to have picked up on his way into the theatre, that the whole thing had been 'taken' from the

German—which it most certainly hadn't, though the alleged original undoubtedly exists. But he didn't dwell on the charge. He was overwhelmed, as his colleagues were overwhelmed, by the synthesis of Barrie with a real story, Barrie with something extraordinarily like a real outlook, Barrie at the peak of his gift for dialogue, and at the peak, however he had got there, of his constructive skill.

It seemed now that nothing but those first-night hitches had ever gone wrong with this play. It was an entertainment with something in it for everyone who thought, or felt, or had a sense of humour, a sense of pathos, an appreciation of life, or an eye for beauty. It was light, but it wasn't shallow. It was crammed with intelligence and observation, but it was entirely unpretentious. It rose and fell with a natural rhythm and it was as neat as a whole as it was incessantly ingenious in detail. With all its individuality it was far more of a classic, or in the classical tradition, than *Quality Street*; and it certainly wasn't its fault that in little more than ten years the speed of history would already have put its main thesis under a glass case. This sort of thing might have happened to Sheridan, though it didn't. But at the moment *The Admirable Crichton* was exquisitely timed; it succeeded in both senses, at the box-office and as a work of art. Clever, fortunate Barrie had followed the right track this time, and neither he nor the idea which came to him in a flash had ever let each other down.

*Quality Street*, however, which had started first, also beat it commercially in the end. A matter of fourteen months against ten. The difference perhaps, between a play of pure charm and a play with solidier values as well. *Crichton*, faintly shocking in its attitude to the established order, was less suited to the kind of audience—useful and invaluable as it is—which looks on a matinée as the background or foreground to afternoon tea. There were probably more addicts and enthusiasts at the Duke of York's than at the Vaudeville, but fewer collectors of the contemporary picture-postcards. Without being pretentious ourselves, there is justification beyond argument for saying that it wasn't the better play that ran longer. And there can be no doubt which of them added more to the author's reputation. *Crichton* every time. It mocked, and it teased, and always there would be complaints from here and there that it ought to have been more serious; but there was the happiest kind of richness in it; it was a full theatrical meal at last; and it put J. M. Barrie as a playwright somewhere in the very top class.

So back he went to Leinster Corner, and to his study over the old stable, and on the following Monday—as if two triumphantly successful plays weren't enough in this very remarkable year—Hodder and Stoughton published *The Little White Bird*. Scribner's, who had been serialising it since August, had brought out their own edition ten days earlier, and the combined sales for the first season reached fifty-five thousand copies. Pretty good. Strikingly good, considering what a queer, indescribable sort of book it was; starting as a novel, breaking down, taking in old newspaper articles, and then with its second wind, setting forth on the chapters—again so queer and indescribable—that gave its readers their first introduction to Peter Pan. Here was the true magic; for so many of them had known, or thought they had known, their Kensington Gardens—and suddenly they found that it had changed. They eyed their own children, and wondered for a moment if they could have seen these visions too. They were confused, and some of them were indignant or resentful—for what could a little Scotchman tell them of a place where they had been children themselves? But hundreds and thousands of them, at all kinds of extraordinary ages, fell right into his open trap. Suddenly they were looking through these and other railings to a world that they had forgotten or lost. They never quite knew whether those chapters made them happy or unhappy, but they read them again and again. Was there something in all this mingled pleasure and sadness that they ought to resist? It seemed to madden some of their acquaintances, and perhaps they should have been a little firmer themselves. Yet again the legend held them. They couldn't get away from it. And they, too, suddenly hated being grown up.

It isn't for us to say which class of reader was right, or whether the magic was all innocent or not. Both views have been taken and argued, and Barrie, who had used so much of his equipment almost without conscious control, was certainly no final court of appeal. The book was out now, and he was pleased if any of his friends wrote and said they liked it. But otherwise he was detached again, and genuinely detached. He had had his own fun from it in the study in Gloucester Road, but now—though he was still in Kensington Gardens so often, and still telling stories to the little Davieses—he wanted to get on with something else. Once more he had interpreted or chimed in with the spirit of the age—for in the early nineteen-hundreds children were coming almost violently into

fashion. But don't let any parent presume on this, and start telling him about nurseries that he hadn't discovered for himself. Up went an eyebrow, to the accompaniment of the weariest and most perfunctory smile. Very few parents felt inclined to mention either children or fairies to the author of *The Little White Bird* after that.

Do you like it yourself? Have you read it? Well, have you noticed this? The framework, the key-note, the essence of the whole hotch-potch is again the glorification of motherhood. But save for one secretly allusive paragraph—a reference to the old, haunting horror of Jim Winter's death—there isn't a thought or a trace in it of Margaret Ogilvy. She's been exorcised. She might never have existed. No freedom for little Barrie, though. Another mother was firm and fast in her place.

In the garden between the house and the study at Leinster Corner there was a large, new kennel. Barrie passed it as he went to and fro, and it may even have occurred to him that it was amply large enough for human occupation, though he hadn't yet thought of a father called Mr. Darling. But in any case there was no dog in it, for the new, black-and-white Newfoundland puppy—a Landseer, the breeder called it—had resolutely put its four feet down about sleeping out of doors. Had also raised its voice when an attempt had been made to enforce this arrangement, and had been let in again, and hadn't gone back. So that presently the kennel, having served its secret purpose, disappeared from the scene.

It was Mrs. Barrie who had first discovered, as dog-lovers do, that mourning for Porthos was no protection against the same risks and responsibilities again. A new dog there had got to be. She found it, bought it, and Barrie again provided it with a name. Luath. The ignorant found it a strange name indeed. The educated recalled *The Two Dogs* of Robert Burns, in which Luath is the poor man's dog, and is supposed to represent the peasantry. The still more scholarly may have realised that Burns, in all probability, took the name from Ossian's *Fingal*. They may also have considered that the present Luath's master was anything but a poor man—though they didn't know, as can now be revealed, that his gross income this year would come to only just under sixteen thousand pounds. But then Burns's other dog, Caesar, isn't supposed to represent wealth so much as gentility, and anyhow Luath, with its suggestion of a sonorous bark, was a fine name for a very fine animal indeed.

Never quite the same, for Barrie, as his beloved and almost human St. Bernard. Never quite so good at those special and intimate games. But a dog of character as he, too, soon grew to an immense size. Famous in his own era for such a passion for motoring that he would force his way into strange vehicles when the occupants were trying to alight, and only his master or mistress could get him out again. It was Luath, too, who caught hedgehogs in the garden at Black Lake, and brought them carefully to Barrie and the little Davieses, to show, it would seem, that he also knew how to play at being wrecked on an island. It was Luath, as was said before, whose head and coat were copied for Nana in *Peter Pan*. He played a scene in it himself once, having first studied his imitator's performance from a box. But always—though again now he walked miles with Barrie in the country and in Kensington Gardens—he was actually just a little more his mistress's dog. Presently he would be hers entirely, and then his master would never have a dog again. It seems impossible that Porthos could ever have gone out of his life like that.

Up in that smoke-filled study at the end of the little London garden, ideas were still coming thick and fast; and though Mr. Darling was still shadowy and hardly more than distantly implicit, a play about a mother and her children was already cropping up in the notes. To be written, perhaps, from the children's point of view? Further queries. "Ellaline their mother? Or Lena Ashwell? Or Mrs. Campbell? Or Ellen Terry?" Part of the imagination was always the playwright's, however fanciful the rest of it.

Another entry.

"5. Peter—'Mother, how did we get to know you?'"

But that, of course, was Peter Davies, not the other Peter, though the line—inverted—would presently slip into the other Peter's play. This autumn there seems to have been no thought of dramatising *The Little White Bird*. The play about children was at first to have been something else; and when the hidden barrier fell, and the shape of the play showed itself, it still wasn't *The Little White Bird* that was the source or quarry, but the earlier games and inventions from which it had been taken, too.

"Fairy play, Gerald as the boy." No, that isn't it yet, either. The clue was still hidden. The notes dart away again, and the allusions



are suddenly all to plays about grown-ups. The success of *Crichton*, both in itself and with the public, was enormously encouraging, but somehow it had raised the secret standard, too. Impudence and impertinence were still tempting, and plays in which the theatre itself was the object of mockery, but there was a new and critical eye for plots that were only second-rate. One couldn't always tell at first whether they were second-rate or not—and sometimes, it must be admitted, the ultimate judgment wouldn't always be sound—but this was the constant test now, and the end of many a promising flash. The only thought that never occurred was the thought of not going on. For what else could one do? What other life was there, essentially and as the real background, except this endless search through the little box for something to decorate and something to express?

Here it comes. The handwriting is appalling, and the entries are no longer numbered, but when something is underlined like this one knows that for the moment at any rate there is special approval of the find. "*The Chemist's Daughter*." And four pages of notes at once. "All love proceedeth from the stomach"—that is the first and most startling of them. The rest, in fact, are still rather vague and hesitant—not to mention illegible—though we seem to detect something again about a Duke. He won't be a Duke by the time he's done with. He'll be the Earl of Carlton; a second idea, about ten pages later—"Peer and wife in distress because son engaged to a nobody"—will have been added or incorporated; and there, by the end of 1902 or the beginning of the new year, is the first, rough, ghostly outline of *Little Mary*.

The ingredients will perhaps never quite fuse. Barrie as a philosophical dietician will never be very convincing, and Barrie smiting the upper classes will somehow be fiercer yet far less effective than in *Crichton*. Then there is going to be the "little mother" motif, foreshadowed in *The Wedding Guest*, to produce a number of extremely embarrassing lines. The final curtain—the short, surprising scene where the middle-aged earl suddenly pairs off with the eighteen-year-old heroine—isn't really going to satisfy anyone. And there is the difficulty, on which the critics will pounce, of building a play round a secret or mystery which can be neither after the first night. *Little Mary*, in fact, for all its skilful dialogue, and its mixture of gaiety and sentiment, is undoubtedly going to be a rather second-rate concoction, after all.

As yet, however, at the beginning of 1903, hope, as well as skill and industry, would be hovering round its cradle in the study at Leinster Corner. On the last day of January, which was the hundredth night of *The Admirable Crichton*, the Barries gave a supper-party on the stage at the Duke of York's. Great fun, and long remembered by the lucky guests as an evening of friendliness, and happiness, and all the rich security which some would afterwards associate with the era of Charles Frohman, and some with that of Edward VII. No publicity, and no real extravagance, but kind, amusing, and clever people meeting to celebrate something that pleased them all. Barrie must have got his money's worth for once that night, in the rôle of host at such a gathering; lolling back in his chair, smoking an enormous cigar, surrounded by beautiful women, flattering them and making them laugh. Or as captain again, for a few hours at any rate, on what was almost as good as his own quarter-deck. A glorious background of heavy advance booking. *Quality Street*—which had now been honoured by a Command Performance at Windsor Castle—still packing the Vaudeville. His new book still selling steadily, in two countries, week after week. Such feasts were rarer in those days, the guests were still much more grateful, and for those who didn't live by it there was still a mysterious thrill in finding themselves on the stage. Bohemia, in 1903, was becoming decidedly more respectable, but it hadn't lost its own form of integrity, or cheapened itself by throwing away its old tradition of caste. Perhaps this kind of party was helping in that direction—though if so, then Irving and Tree and Alexander were all just as guilty—but at the moment nothing had gone too far. Or so it seems now. . . .

Horses still jingled their bits in St. Martin's Lane that night, as the guests emerged to drive away in hansoms and growlers, or broughams and landaus. The Barries' steam dog-cart was out of commission—not that it ever took them to evening parties—and they wouldn't have their new Lanchester until May. It is a legitimate piece of reconstruction to see them sharing a four-wheeled cab with the Llewelyn Davieses, which presently would drop them in Bayswater and then go jogging on towards Notting Hill. All quiet and dark now at the Duke of York's. Luath booming his welcome, and then lights out at Leinster Corner, too.

*Little Mary*—though its title was as yet so secret or uncertain that

it would go to Miss Dickens's typewriting office under the odd alias of "A.B.C."—was still taking most of the time now. But still and of course there were other ideas to be caught, by the note-books, in pencil or ink. "*Novel*. 'One Woman.' A series of stories in each of which the woman acts differently—as if a different woman." Ten years later this would crop up as the first act of *The Adored One*—or *The Legend of Leonora*, as it was called in America—or *Seven Women*, as it appears, without the other two acts, in the collected plays.

More notes, but no more for novels. Some short, some long. *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* is already showing signs of emerging from various false starts; but before it can do this—which it does, suddenly and pretty completely, some time this spring—there is a more than significant scrawl. "*Play*. 'The Happy Boy.' Boy who can't grow up—runs away from pain and death—is caught *wild*. (*End escapes*)."

This is the real beginning of the play of *Peter Pan*. Not that Peter in the play is ever caught, and not that Peter in *The Little White Bird* wasn't just as anxious to escape. But the wish, which was so deep down in Barrie himself, had now suggested itself through another channel and in a different medium. It was to be used for a play this time, and though we, looking at that note, can see now how Peter was almost bound to force himself into it, the author was still approaching it from further back and further off. A door was again almost wide open, and so much of the country beyond it was well known to him already, but it still hadn't occurred to him that this Happy Boy was an old and familiar friend. He must struggle for several months still, thinking of scenes in the theatre, perhaps, rather than of what was so much closer at hand. Then it would all begin falling together, and Peter, even though considerably translated in the process, would at least have his own way.

When Frohman came over this year, in April as usual or thereabouts, *Little Mary* was ready for him, *Alice*—at present entitled "Family Affair"—was in a state when it could at least be discussed, but the play about the boy who wouldn't or couldn't grow up can only have been mentioned as a still rather formless idea. No doubt he said "Fine" when he heard of it, and he also seems to have been curiously impressed by the outline of *Alice*. As for *Little Mary*, he read it eagerly, and because it was by Barrie—whom he loved, and who had given him two current successes in London—he would certainly produce it here, and on the customary scale, in the early

autumn. But as a New York manager he couldn't help seeing some drawbacks. There was no real star part in it, or nothing nearly big enough for this purpose, and satire on the English aristocracy wouldn't interest American audiences unless there were a stronger story behind it. *Crichton*, now, was different—one can picture his eyes flashing, for he had now seen it at the Duke of York's, and had fallen in love with it all over again, too. *Crichton* was now as good as fixed for the next New York season, and would, as a matter of fact, be one of his seventeen offerings there before the end of the year. But though Miss Adams was returning to his banner, there was, frankly, nothing for her, or for anyone else that he could think of, in *Little Mary*. He was probably right. He was almost certainly right. Barrie had missed the double event this time, and must be content for the moment with two *Quality Streets*, two *Crichtons*, and every kind of encouragement for the plays that were still on the stocks.

Was he content? Not quite, we should judge. The game was still to show nobody when he was disappointed, but those who were nearest to him knew well enough that he could be bitter as well as patient, savage as well as philosophical. Frohman certainly gilded the pill, and no West End three-act comedy would be cast or mounted this year with less regard for expense. But though Barrie still looked on himself, from one angle, as the laborious, consecrated student, or humble disciple of all who had mastered his craft, he couldn't help seeing another picture, too. A self-made man of only forty-three, a big name in both branches of his profession, a man of power, a man who had got what he wanted—or at any rate what he had set out to get—a man whose gifts could be turned on to hypnotise almost anyone, who had gone his own way as an author and yet brought the world to his feet. A man who had left Scotland, eighteen years ago, with twelve pounds in his purse, and was now so rich that only Gilmour, as a matter of fact, had the faintest idea what his fortune was worth.

These thoughts, this realisation can come to no one and leave him untouched. And, if, in addition, he should be sensitive about his size, then—even though this has been one of the special spurs to his ambition—he may also so well be specially sensitive to any check or rebuff. In this case there were any number of moods in which humility could be assumed, but perhaps it was part of the reason for his success that it was hardly ever felt. He was J. M. Barrie, and

sometimes it was a pretty lonely and desperate thing to be. But if his work wasn't appreciated, or if its purpose—which wasn't always, it must be admitted, entirely clear to himself—met with misunderstanding, then there was a kind of low growl in his very soul. His head turned sideways, his expression became cold, remote, and terrifying. He was despising you now for your blindness and denseness. Even Frohman must have seen that look at times, and have dreaded and pitied it. Yet in the matter of *Little Mary* he could still just manage to resist it; and there would be no *Little Mary* in the United States.

So Barrie was indignant and resentful, and hated feeling vulnerable, and then drifted off towards stoicism or simulated indifference—and examining himself again saw that they weren't altogether unbecoming. They made him more mysterious and baffling to the on-lookers. He liked that. It put them, however tall they were, at an unmistakable disadvantage. This had always been one of his best parts. And still, as he tried it on again and it consoled him, there was plenty of zest for the next day's bout of work.

For the games, too, with both children and grown-ups. George and Jack Davies were both at Wilkinson's now, and with Peter at the kindergarten in Norland Place, the meetings in Kensington Gardens were mostly confined to week-ends. But the Allahakbarries had all left school, and could be summoned—now that the cricket season had started again—whenever he chose. They played the artists again in May, at Esher, and though the Press tracked them down, the captain forgave this when they publicly credited him with "a brisk 10." There was another match at Whitsun, of which no detail but the date survives. And on July 1st the Black Lake fixture was resumed with so much added elaboration that it was now referred to as the Black Lake Week. This involved two matches; the first (a victory) against Edgar Horne's eleven at Shackleford, and the second (a defeat) against more artists at Frensham. Barrie, Mason, Will Meredith, Water Frith, Maurice Hewlett, Gilmour, Charles Tennyson (Birrell's step-son), Henry Ford, E. V. Lucas, Owen Seaman, and Turley Smith. These were the Black Lake Allahakbarries for the summer of 1903, with as many as possible again crammed into the cottage, and the rest quartered as near as accommodation could be found. With their wives, of course, in the case of the married members. With sports and golf-croquet again, on the lawn between the long hedge and the pine-woods. With Mary

Barrie as a superbly efficient hostess, looking prettier than ever and providing one banquet after another. With speeches—this was the first but by no means the last occasion on which Barrie made one of his best cricketing jokes; about the player who scored a single in his first innings, “but the second time was not so successful.” With another joke about how their adversaries had once made fourteen, “but we nearly won.” With an impudent exposition of his own feelings after an incredible and imaginary century.

And so on, with all the special fun and happiness which a few can still remember, at these house-parties which were like no other house-parties before or since. Talks and walks. Luath and the new Lanchester in the background. Mrs. Barrie’s sunk garden, excavated last year and now full of cleverly-chosen plants, the admiration of many if not all. For in the nineteen-hundreds gardens as well as children were coming into fashion. Was there the beginning of something almost too dazzling and glittering in this neat little estate? Too much money now? Or not? Something missing? Something wrong? Or were these thoughts only an inevitable reaction after so much laughter and so many green peas?

The last guest left on the Tuesday or Wednesday, and the Barries again stayed behind. On the Sunday morning the newspapers announced the death of William Ernest Henley, whom nothing but unconquerable courage had kept in this world to the age of fifty-three. He had done, as we know, a great deal not only for Barrie, but for many of the most important literary figures of the day; yet the power to make money for himself was denied him, and he had been a Civil List pensioner for the last five years. He left a widow, to whom, after the customary delay, another and even smaller pension would be granted. Barrie had been generous already, and would go on being generous while she lived. For the moment he sent her £250, and it is as easy as it is true to say that he could very well afford this. But he did it, he did it promptly, and one can be quite certain that he did it with every kind of secrecy and tact. The whole record of these gifts and assumptions of responsibility will never be traced, and we know also that mere wealth or even wealth coupled with kind-heartedness can pause so often before the actual deed is done. He couldn’t systematise his charity—how could he when everything else was done by inspiration or impulse?—but it mustn’t be forgotten, as one apparent contradiction after another

goes into the portrait of this strange, confusing, and bewildering J.M.B.

The Davieses came to Tilford again for August, with their four boys ranging in age now from ten to three. New and old stories for them. New and old games. Other visitors coming and going at the Cottage, expeditions in the Lanchester, or still sometimes on bicycles, to friends in the neighbourhood; and Barrie, whatever else he was doing, thinking more and more of the play which was now just called "Fairy"—though less as a title than as a means of identification, when quite so many other thoughts were always in the background as well. Its outline and detail were still far from clear to him, though from anything but shortage of material; for the richness available covered five solid years of story-telling, not to mention something like thirty years of preparation for it, and fresh inventions were still expected and forthcoming every day. The play could have been in a hundred scenes, or more, so far as that went. But there must be cold-blooded calculations in the same mind and at the same time. As fascinating sometimes to cut as to create. Technique, which he still thought was all nonsense, but which he had learnt so thoroughly that he couldn't avoid it, was slowly attending to the exuberant excess.

On August 28th *The Admirable Crichton* reached the end of its first and longest continuous run, and at almost the same moment rehearsals for *Little Mary* began. But not at the Duke of York's, where Boucicault was to produce and his wife was to star in Pinero's *Letty*. *Little Mary* would, in fact, have the greater financial success, but Barrie was Frohman's second string this season, and for his play Wyndham's Theatre was leased. No other sign of preferential treatment. Both plays were given every luxury that a play could have. For example, there was again no real reason why the second and third acts of *Little Mary* shouldn't share the same set. But they weren't going to. The first act—or, to be quite accurate, the prologue—required and was given the elaboration of the back parlour of a chemist's shop, with the shop itself and the street beyond it visible as well. Then the story moved to a country house, and to please, flatter, and amuse the author, the scene-painter had been sent down to Farnham, and reproduced first the garden front and then the combined hall and dining-room of Black Lake Cottage itself. Very elaborately again, and so far as the Barries' friends were concerned,

with the worst possible effect on stage illusion—for of course they would keep on thinking of the real owners and wondering where they were. No doubt, though, it was just the kind of secret joke and tribute to his position that one of them very much liked. Well, who wouldn't? What could be more fun for anyone than to see his own house on the stage?

And no skimping over the cast. John Hare—not yet Sir John, but near the top of his profession—as the Earl of Carlton. Gerald du Maurier as his at first weak-minded son. Henry Vibart as the chemist. Eric Lewis—who will be Lord Loam in the first of the *Crichton* revivals—and Clarence Blakiston as the two doctors. A. E. Matthews, who will never look his real age, as the titled schoolboy. Last but not least, as the chemist's daughter, as the artless Irish heroine who cures all ills of mind and body with her father's dietary, but turns it into a mystery as the only method of winning her patients' trust—Miss Nina Boucicault. Younger sister of Boucicault at the Duke of York's. Daughter, therefore, of Dion Boucicault the First, and therefore, again, with the theatre in the very marrow of her bones. Not beautiful. Or you don't think so for a minute or two. But then her voice and movements do rather more than the trick. If Barrie writes something that raises a slight shudder in print, Miss Boucicault only has to say it and your heart turns over three times while tears trickle from your eyes. This gift and others she will be bringing, in only a little over a year now, to the creation of the first stage Peter Pan. The best, as no one has ever questioned, because of this haunting, eerie quality, this magic, and this sadness which is a kind of beauty too. Others will be more boyish, or more principal-boyish, or gayer and prettier, or more sinister and inhuman, or more ingeniously and painstakingly elfin. Some will achieve quite notable success by just going on the stage, looking young, and enjoying themselves. After all, the part can never really be played except by one form of convention or another. But Miss Boucicault was the Peter of all Peters who made you forget this. She was unearthly but she was real. She obtruded neither sex nor sexlessness, which has so far beaten everyone else. Above all she had the touch of heart-breaking tragedy that is there in the story or fable from beginning to end; yet she never seemed to know it. It's true that anyone who played this part for the first time would start with an enormous advantage. But Barrie, lucky in so many of his actresses, was never luckier than here.



There she was, then, at Wyndham's in September, 1903, as Moira Loney; with Barrie smoking at her from the stalls, and John Hare—a bit difficult and a bit of a martinet, but of course he knew his job, too—sharing in the direction. Barrie turned aside for a moment, fished out his little pocket-book, and made another note. "Hare watching my face for laughs." Poor Hare! Of course he watched in vain. He was very funny indeed, in his neat, dry, skilful way; but the author wasn't going to laugh at him. That was as vain a hope as that G.B.S. should fail to laugh when he heard his own lines. "Not bad," said Barrie's expression at its most favourable. But if he felt a laugh coming, he would do anything to stop it. Get up suddenly and go out into the corridor, or bend down and disappear from sight. The only signs of amusement that he allowed himself were when a bit of scenery fell over, or the curtain rose too soon and surprised a stage-hand in a bowler hat. Then there would be a weary smile and perhaps a Barrie-ish comment. But the actors mustn't expect this kind of encouragement. Absolutely against the rules.

*Little Mary* opened on Thursday, September 24th, and in due course, as had been anticipated, the word "stomach" brought a gale of Edwardian laughter from all parts of the house. It swept away all chance of the play being treated as anything but a booby-trap or *jeu d'esprit*, but there was considerable enthusiasm at the end, and Barrie was shouted for, and didn't appear. "Set down in black and white," said *The Times* or Walkley next day, "the thing seems rather silly." But there was nothing else to qualify nearly a column of warm appreciation, and the other critics agreed. Barrie had pulled their legs—that was the general reaction—but then Barrie was Barrie now; licensed to be impudent if he felt like it, and particularly when he was entertaining too. The moral or lesson, if any, was tossed aside. He could have a success on these terms, but not in the character of even the mildest form of castigator of the age. In fact, he had better put any idea of that sort right out of his head.

One can't very well argue with this attitude, which was unanimous, and reasonable enough. And though Barrie would have liked to be praised also as a preacher or prophet, he had at least got his box-office success. It ran, preceded by a series of curtain-raisers, for almost exactly six months, with business dropping at the end, as the joke, perhaps, became rather too well known. Mean-

while, its title was on the way to becoming a national euphemism, and had provided a comic song for the Gaiety. A wit, or more likely several wits at once, had the happy notion of calling it "Sentimental Tummy," which indeed gave you the whole thing in two words. But they weren't words that ever amused the author. It was quite clear that he thought them in rather poor taste.

And this was the play, of course, to which Jack Davies unknowingly contributed one of the lines and laughs. It was when he spotted his own repartee, at a personally conducted visit to a matinée, that Barrie drew up the agreement which is printed in *The Greenwood Hat*. Jack received a royalty of a halfpenny a performance, and his brothers were rather jealous, for it certainly went to his head. If Peter had drawn the same fees each time that Michael Darling, in *Peter Pan*, said, "Mother, how did you get to know me?" some big money would have been involved. But of course the author couldn't pay everybody for the lines he lifted, though the notion of the agreement lingered; and cropped up again—right at the very end.

Here, in October, comes another tribute, from another source. It was Seymour Hicks again who effected an introduction between Barrie and the second Viscount Esher, who like all his family was a stage enthusiast, and at this time was Secretary to His Majesty's Office of Works. Fascinated by his new acquaintance—though always, it must be admitted, with a trace of patronage—and especially by *The Little White Bird*, he had an idea, and was in a position, moreover, to carry it out. Barrie, to whom for some obscure reason, he presently took to alluding as the Furry Beast, should have his own, private key to Kensington Gardens. He hadn't asked for it, and as a matter of fact he very seldom used it. But though Lord Esher had first to square the old Duke of Cambridge, now in his fiftieth year as Ranger, and reported, in a letter to his younger son, that "it would have been far easier to get the little man a baronetcy," he managed to bring it off. Barrie received an almost royal intimation of the honour, and then had to go down and promise a permanent official that he wouldn't misuse it, but in the last week of October the key was his. The fairies had almost literally done this for him, and if he wanted to look for them now, he could. Gratifying enough, even after the tone of the correspondence and of that interview. At any rate nobody else had a key, and it was

something to be envied—as he undoubtedly was—even for what he didn't really want. Yes, he liked that part of it, as he liked anything which quietly accentuated his own little majesty and might. There's a high-spirited letter, though on another subject, written on the day that the key was handed over. Funny and gay; all about a pretended list of professional guests for a friend's dinner-party. Names, ages, specialists, and fees. Barrie bubbling over again, and with the thoroughness that went into all these jokes. Then—two days later—sad and bad news from the north.

His sister Sara, forty-nine last June, was found dead in her room at Strath View on the morning of November 1st. This utterly unexpected blow—for until the previous evening she had appeared to be in her ordinary health—was a painful shock to everyone. To her uncle, Dr. Ogilvy, who now, at eighty-one was left without his companion, housekeeper, and adopted daughter. To Barrie, who had been deeply attached to her both from sentiment and on principle. Another link with the old days broken. Another little procession to the cemetery on the Hill. Strath View more than ever a house of shadows. Sympathy was offered and received, and Robertson Nicoll produced a sincere and flattering article, but for a while Barrie was more silent than ever at Leinster Corner. Engagements were put off, and friends hesitated to intrude. Yet he was still working, hour after hour, and day after day, in the garden study.

*Alice* was awaiting revision now, but the fairy play was taking most of his time. With more almost unimaginable thoroughness. There are nearly five hundred notes on it in one continuous series, and almost as many again, on separate sheets, as the work went on. Playwright *versus* story-teller. Sometimes he must have known that he was asking for theatrical miracles and impossibilities, or even have forgotten that he was working on a play at all. Then the balance would swing the other way, and dreams and fancies would be twisted into a practicable shape. Thus it grew, with no urgency of time, only of self-expression. Even if it all came to nothing, it still had to go on, as he smoked, and walked, and wrote.

In the middle of November Frohman presented *The Admirable Crichton*—starring William Gillette, who in this country, at any rate, would always be Sherlock Holmes—at the Lyceum Theatre in New York. It was a success, though not on the scale of either *The Little Minister* or *Quality Street*, and after about four profit-

able months it was withdrawn. There would be tours, though, with Gillette and others for many years yet, and cheques coming over to be added to all the rest. America would still be doing its full share.

The Llewelyn Davieses' fifth son, Nicholas—presently to be known as Nico—was born a week later, or in the same week as the last night of *Quality Street*; and for ten days there was actually only one Barrie play on the London boards. Then back came E. S. Willard, to the St. James's, with *The Professor's Love Story*; playing it, at the opening performance, for the eighth hundred and ninety-second time, and continuing to play it for another seven weeks. Ten days, again, after the beginning of this revival, or on December 17th a much more ominous bit of history was made. At Kitty Hawk, in North Carolina, Orville Wright left the ground in a heavier-than-air flying-machine for the first time in eternity. The feat wasn't reported in the British Press, where *The Times*, for instance, was principally concerned with full-page and last-moment efforts to sell the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on the instalment system. But it had happened. The human race was in for it now. The twentieth century, whether the race knew it or not, was already passing clean out of its control.

1904. What else is happening? Tariff Reform and Chinese Labour have split and shaken the Conservative party, which has been in office now since the summer of 1895, and the Liberals are girding up their loins. Arthur Balfour will mystify and temporise and stay on in Downing Street for many months yet, but there is a spirit abroad and a wind beginning to blow of which everyone is increasingly conscious. The pendulum is surely swinging, and literary men in particular are almost all for freedom, and Free Trade, and a glorious new era. A. E. W. Mason is one of them. He has been adopted as prospective Liberal candidate for Coventry—a Conservative seat—and in January Barrie goes down there to hear him speak. Enjoys it enormously, though of course he catches a cold, and comes back more of a Liberal himself than ever. Admits, which is perfectly true, that he isn't always clear about the actual arguments or points at issue, but likes the feeling of being behind the scenes, as it were, in politics as well as the theatre. Makes notes. Asks questions. Sees it all from one of his special angles, and won't waste the information, for his own purpose, when the time comes.

There was a sudden notion, in the same month, of collaborating

on a play with Q. It might be fun, he thought—and would think so again, though the experiment would never be made—to work with a friend like this, to keep it a secret, and to have their joint effort produced under an imaginary name. Another facet of success, perhaps, this wish to go back and start again; to discover what the public would really think without all their preconceived ideas. To be hailed as a brilliant newcomer, instead of finding oneself taken for granted. But nothing happened. Too much work on hand already, and the scheme flickered out.

Back to the fairy play again. At the moment it was called "Peter and Wendy," and later in the year, when it was first shown to Frohman, it would be "The Great White Father." But in February, when the first complete version went to be typed, it was simply called "Anon—A Play." It's in six scenes, and some of the characters would have strange names to us now. One looks in vain for the pathetic Smee, whose lines as yet are all given to other pirates. Tinker Bell is called "Tippy-toe." And the last scene takes place in Kensington Gardens, where Starkey is disguised as a park-keeper, and Hook as a schoolmaster, while the lost boys—reclaimed by their parents—have started growing up. Once more Peter is nearly caught by his formidable adversary, but the crocodile emerges from the Serpentine, and Hook-Wilkinson—or perhaps one should say Hook-Pilking'on—falls into its jaws. All this is mixed up with some fantasy about clowns, harlequins, and columbines—a few playgoers may remember that a harlequin and columbine flitted across the stage in the first acted version—who take part in a kind of ballet with a corps of assistant-masters. The play ends with the well-known scene of Peter and Wendy in the Little House, though not on the tree-tops, but still in the Gardens.

Otherwise it was all more or less set as in less than twelve months it would be performed. Only details would be removed and added in the first five scenes, though this would continue right through rehearsals. But they, and all that was tried and discarded, were still in the unknown future. It wasn't even certain yet that Frohman, when he had read the script of which he had so far only heard, would see it as a practicable proposition at all. Somehow he must be made to, of course, and Barrie had thought of a way. First he should be shown *Alice*. For this, in the author's opinion was as reliable an entertainment as anything that he had written. And then, with this gilt-edged investment delivered into his keeping, the

spell must be put on him again. Yes, the fairy play had got to be done somehow; if only for the sake of the weeks and weeks of preparation that a play like this would need. The author's heart was so set on it that there seems to have been a moment—for even he realised some of the expense that would be involved—when he read it to Beerbohm Tree. His Majesty's, in those days, was famous and notorious for the scale of its productions. But Tree just couldn't see the point. He was even kind enough to warn Frohman that Barrie had gone out of his mind.

One might put this as some time in April. But we're not really there yet, and Frohman is still in America. Here, on the other hand, on March 6th, at the twentieth annual dinner of the Playgoers' Club, is Barrie as the guest of the evening. His health proposed by Walkley. His own speech as carefully rehearsed, and as full of studied hesitations and impromptus, as ever. Still pretending that he has never been present at any occasion like this before. Still looking mournful and weary as he plays steadily for laugh after laugh, and gets them every time. An impudent performance in a way—though in fact less effective when he tries to be serious—yet the character which he produces is so well-established and so firmly built up that almost everyone accepts it. "So that's what he's like," they are saying and are meant to say. They're right and they're wrong. It's certainly what he is like to-night, and will be like again whenever the same circumstances recur. Yet think of all the characters whom he has momentarily suppressed, and who are watching him with such close attention as he in turn watches them with an inward eye. They're all there behind that big cigar, on that Sunday evening at the Hotel Cecil, though only one is allowed to make the speech.

This was the spring when William Nicholson painted him. A half-length portrait, turning sadly to one side, or caught perhaps as he strides to and fro. Very thin still. Untidy black hair. Moustache still drooping at the ends. The huge forehead, the sensitive nose, the deep-sunk, heavily-shadowed eyes, sombre and remote. Stand-up, single white collar with the corners bent back. Dark and, one suspects, ill-fitting suit. Black tie. A mournful but arresting little figure, staring into the future and the past. It's a fine head, though, with strength as well as sensibility. There's beauty in it, though the eyes—always the best feature, as well he knew—seem clouded at the moment. When Mrs. Winter, or his sister Maggie,

saw this portrait, she immediately burst into tears. The artist, who was present, could never discover if this were praise or criticism, for he naturally hesitated to ask. More likely it was neither. Just hero-worship for the wonderful brother, as it all came over her again. She was so proud of him, and she never forgot how, in the time of her great tragedy, he had kept on calling her wistful. So of course when she looked at his portrait, she wept.

It was in the spring of 1904, also, that the Davieses left Kensington Park Gardens and moved to Egerton House, at Berkhamsted, in Hertfordshire. Arthur Davies's brains and industry were now beginning to earn their reward at the Bar, the Notting Hill house had become rather a tight fit, and there was a well-known and first-rate school at Berkhamsted for the two elder boys. As they would only be about twenty-five miles from London, the bread-winner could go up and down to his chambers and the Law Courts easily enough. No more Sunday mornings, then, for Barrie, with his games and stories, in Kensington Gardens. But on the other hand no break in the relationship. Sylvia, as well as her husband, was still coming to London often enough. There were still holiday meetings and the joint jaunts to Paris. And Barrie must have gone down to Berkhamsted—for the day, for the night, or for the week-end—quite a hundred times during the next three years. Critical observers, who are never lacking, would of course notice and allude to this. Always there are the ones who will look for mischief and drama in other people's affairs, will talk, and allow themselves to be overheard; and in so many cases will be contributing nine-tenths of the mischief themselves. Barrie was dazzled, and he was rich; in a way he was extraordinarily innocent; and if Sylvia Davies used him—which she was doubtably doing by this time—as a kind of extra nurse, extremely useful fairy-godmother, or sometimes even errand-boy, it wasn't in her character to resist that amount of temptation. More, for her, never existed. She hadn't, quite obviously, begun by asking him to do anything, and the background of so many happy families contains the valuable and devoted friend—though strictly speaking he is generally a bachelor—who is known to be quietly infatuated with the mother, and whom the children regard or address as an uncle.

This would be Barrie's rôle now, with all the added qualities of his own. It was all he asked, and no one could have been more indignant at a suggestion that he was asking for more. But then,

of course, he wasn't a bachelor, and for whatever part he had cast himself, this fatal fact remained. In part of his mind—that mind which could see so clearly and warn so wisely where others were concerned—there still lurked the assumption that married people must inevitably grow closer together as the years went by. That no special or constant effort was needed for this; that his own house, whatever he did in it or outside it, wasn't necessarily like the houses of his happier, simpler, and also far more experienced friends. He didn't realise the implicit faithlessness of all those dreams—the notebooks are beginning to be full of them—of somehow going back to his childhood, of starting all over again, or of vanishing and reappearing as someone else. Meanwhile, the garden study, where he spent such long hours, seemed to take him so much further away than the little study in Gloucester Road. Or he had gone down to Berkhamsted again, full of kindness and of amusing or entertaining ideas, and once more his wife was alone. Could he suppose then, that no one would allude to this, that she could possibly be contented, that whatever her feelings for him or the size of his income, she didn't have bitter struggles with her injured pride? Yet perhaps this was the truth. For it wasn't only his little person that he was now removing so often. His thoughts were escaping from Leinster Corner, too.

Yet of course there were still the friends in London, the little dinner-parties at home, and the evenings when both Barries went out to plays or to hospitality elsewhere. This was the year that the E. V. Lucases—with Audrey, of course, who was now six—came to live on Campden Hill. Many meetings, long talks, and increasing friendship. Gordon Place and their little cottage in Kent were the happiest of houses in those days. Crammed full of intelligence and refreshment and charm.

Frohman was over again, in his flat at the Savoy. He read both the new plays, and about both he made up his mind at once. There was no question of accepting the fairy play as a makeweight, or of regarding *Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire* as a means of covering its expense. *Alice* amused him; he saw a fine part in it for one of his American stars; and if Barrie wanted Miss Ellen Terry to play in it in London—which he did now, though actually this was only an inspiration that had come in the last few months—then Frohman would back him up. He did, too. They both went down to see her in her



farm-house at Smallhythe and Barrie told her the story, but for some reason didn't read her the play. Perhaps because he still hadn't put in all the lines which would convince her, and everyone else, that he had had her in his mind all along. "I believe," she says in her autobiography, "he told it better than he wrote it." Well, we can believe that, too. Of course he was putting the spell on her—though there was more than this in it, for she had been out of theatrical luck lately, and he wanted to help her without showing that he was helping her—and she yielded. Was completely carried away, in fact, and would only discover what her part was really like when it was too late to back out. Frohman, with these two names and a play that he believed in, couldn't think of presenting it anywhere but at the Duke of York's. But other arrangements had been made there for the autumn. So it looked as if the fairy play, so clearly asking for a production at Christmas, would be the one to get in first.

As it did, of course, for Frohman never hesitated about it—in spite of Tree's warning—from the moment that he laid down the last act. He had never staged anything like it before—though neither, it should go without saying, had anyone else—but even he had never felt or shown more enthusiasm and fervour. Barrie, his own Barrie, the Barrie for whom he never reflected how much he had done, had gone straight to his romantic and child-like heart. What did Charles Frohman know of London nurseries, or of fairies, or of boys' adventure stories? What didn't he know of the difficulties and expense which the production must inevitably involve? These questions were utterly irrelevant. The magic which would grip millions had called to him already, even from ninety pages of type-script. He would never get over it if he couldn't present this play. Where was *Lestocq*? Where was *Boucicault*? He summoned them instantly, and began acting all the different parts at once, telling the fantastic story in his own almost equally fantastic words. And everything must be done as Barrie wished it. No half-measures. Never mind the risk. His eyes flashed, his gestures became quite indescribable; never had his megalomania risen to greater heights. Never had this inspired little Jew been happier. And never, of course, had any author had quite such astounding luck.

Perhaps he deserved it. Certainly he had paid for a great deal of it, and the full account had not been presented yet. While much of the luck would also be for audiences, in England and then in

America; for *Peter Pan* was a play that could never be presented meanly. It demanded, and would now receive, the full resources of the modern theatre, intensive preparation for months on end, and a princely or imperial treatment of the cost. Faith must be pumped into this production, not only by all who were actively concerned in it, but from a source somewhere behind it and above it, from someone with the courage to face any complications, or setback, or even disaster that might occur. It is almost impossible to realise now what a tremendous experiment was being made. But Frohman immediately looked right beyond this, and for him the only real failure would be the failure to give it and Barrie everything that they asked.

Of course he had secret doubts and terrors; there was never a first night, in all those hundreds, when he didn't suffer every agony that the world of the theatre knows. Or you can call him a gambler if you like, and that was true enough, too. But he never hedged, and he never lost heart. And so, presently, the play of *Peter Pan* would be as much of a monument to this little colossus among managers as to the other little colossus who had written it and given it to him to read. There's no exaggeration in that statement. Without Frohman there could have been no such story as we shall have to tell.

This, then, was what happened, and bits of Barrie were gratified and grateful, but bits, we can be quite certain, weren't the least surprised. Not quite such large or important bits, perhaps, as he would now feel it his duty to pretend. Yet outwardly there was still extreme composure; and to show what further bits of him still thought of the theatre, here is an entry from one of the little notebooks that must have been written almost at the same time.

"There shd be one day in year (like Lifeboat Saty.) on which we all told actors what we really think of them. Adore them all rest of year."

Ungrateful and mischievous creature—did he really think he was going to put this into a book, or an article, or a play? Well, he didn't, anyhow. Having got it off his chest again, he had found the necessary relief. The pen dips once more into the ink-pot, and adds: "The Experiences of a Chairman, &c."

That's easily dated. May 9th, 1904. His forty-fourth birthday,

and there he was, in white tie and tails, presiding at the Hotel Metropole over the one hundred and fourteenth annual dinner of the Royal Literary Fund; which was also the first time, if you can believe it, that a novelist or playwright had been invited to occupy this position, and the first time that women had been admitted to the feast. An exceptional number of fellow-writers attended, and one is glad to note that an exceptional sum of money was raised. It was Barrie's business to give the toasts of the King, of the rest of the royal family, and thirdly—which was where the big speech was expected—of the Fund itself. The usual performance. Jokes, sentiment, mock-nervousness, a touch of gravity about the authors whom the Fund had to help, and of course some gallantry for the female guests. But in the Press reports it is the word laughter, in brackets, that recurs oftenest. There was more of it—what a night for the listeners!—when Comyns Carr proposed the toast of Literature. Response by Mrs. Craigie, or, if you prefer it, by John Oliver Hobbes. Then Mason toasted the Ladies, and was answered by Mrs. Flora Annie Steel. And then Lord Tennyson, as President, gave "Our Chairman" and Barrie rose for the fourth and last time. He was besieged afterwards—indeed, only by seeing where the crowd was thickest could you have told that he was there—at the informal gathering that followed. And then, of course, and suddenly, he had vanished. He and Mrs. Barrie were driving back to Leinster Corner, and one can be pretty certain that his feet were propped up on the opposite seat. Reaction and exhaustion. Another headache, no doubt, on its way. An actor who had written, learnt, and delivered his own four-act play; had tasted applause, and knew well enough that he had earned it. But an actor, or an author, or a Barrie who was still full of tragic envy for his own past. This, just now, had been success; but that, all those years ago, was what he wanted. There was glamour now about the days and nights in Grenville Street, when he had written, and written, and gone on writing until he could hardly hold his pen. Time never went backwards, and the note-books—thirteen years before *Dear Brutus*—were already denying the existence of a second chance. Yet there was a kind of refuge, if one never stopped working, and in the garden study the shadowy outlines were waiting for him of at least half a dozen new plays.

"The Thousand Nightingales." "Play on Too Old at 40 (30?) idea." "Play. Couple with 20 years between acts." "Play. Man

awaiting bride from distant land." "Problem Play. Husband dramatist—wife actress." "One-act Play. The Silent Pool." "One-act Play. What Every Woman Knows."

And plenty more. "The Thousand Nightingales"—which would take in the man (now a traveller or missionary) awaiting bride from distant land—was to be a tragedy, and was expanded, in a succession of notes, to enormous length before he finally dropped it. The couple with twenty years between acts would emerge, in 1913, in *The Will*. The problem play, on the other hand—but nothing should really surprise us—would turn almost immediately into an unfinished farce. As for the last in the list, this was a case where the title had come to him many months ago, and one can't say it isn't a good one. Already it had been attached to one fragmentary scenario after another, but this time, though there would be four acts before he had done with it, he had found the germ of the play that we know. Another three years at least to work it out, beset by obstacles and never really avoiding the blind alleys. But May or June, 1904, is the beginning of it all. This marks the true birthplace of *What Every Woman Knows*.

Meanwhile, there is a third speech this year. At a dinner given by the Authors' Club, on May 30th, to P. F. or Plum Warner, on his return from captaining the M.C.C. in Australia. Barrie was in the Chair again, this was his subject, and he introduced—to everyone's entertainment—some of the jokes that had been tried for the first time on his own team at Black Lake. And then the team itself was again summoned into the field. Another match at Shere in June—seventeen years now since the first one—with Marriott Watson once more back in the eleven. At the end of the month there was another of the trips, with Frohman, to Paris. Staying at the Meurice, seeing plays and sights, watching his manager at work and hearing all his plans. No secrets from Barrie. He knew now what was going to happen to the stars and to other playwrights before they knew it themselves. And then there was the evening when Frohman had arranged for a dinner and a theatre, and Barrie dragged him off to a fair at Auteuil instead. The triumphant evening when he threw rings over knives stuck in a board, and came back with forty-eight of them. Sensation in French fair-ground circles, and Barrie, with that wonderful wrist and eye of his, feeling as if he had broken the bank. He did the same thing, some years afterwards, when Lucas took him to the Derby. Backed every horse except the three that

were placed—probably his first and last connection with the Turf—and then went down among the gipsies and practically cleaned out a Hoop-la stall. A terror, always, at anything like this.

The Black Lake cricket-week again at the beginning of July. This year a friend and protégé of Owen Seaman—a young journalist who was drawing a few guineas a week for writing and editing the lighter material on the front page of *The Globe*—joined the Allahakbarries. Name, P. G. Wodehouse. He batted first, and was followed, among others, by Seaman himself, by Will Meredith, Mason, and Hewlett. The side was beaten twice, by both Edgar Horne's XI and the artists at Frensham. But still there were all the old jokes; the sports, the golf-croquet tournament, and the banquets. Once more the party broke up, and the Barries were left behind.

July 9th. Married ten years now. They hadn't forgotten, though they wouldn't be the only couple to whom at one moment it must have seemed like a century and at another hardly more than a week. A strange week or century in either case. Knowing each other so well, yet wondering, perhaps, if they would ever know each other at all. Barrie went up to his study, took down a dummy volume—red buckram and blank pages—which some publisher had sent him, and started making notes for a play to be called "The Tin Wedding." They run on for six crowded pages; but it isn't a very happy couple that he describes and he is hard on both of them. In the almost illegible pencil scrawl there is bitterness and disillusionment. Then one sees the playwright taking charge; jotting down effective lines, or suggesting how an audience might be kept in suspense. By the time the notes break off it would be difficult to accuse him of thinking of his own home. But that was just it, and part of the trouble. The border-line between truth and imagination never existed, or each must always overlap. His own life was a play, in a sense, but whether he were author or actor he never knew. So painfully vulnerable at one moment. So utterly remote and impassive at the next. Whom does one pity? Both victims, of course. And yet there was so much for each that was enviable, too.

No Davieses at Tilford this summer, for at Berkhamsted they were practically in the country anyhow. And no play for early autumn rehearsals, so that both Barries could stay on in Surrey until the end of September. In the last week in August Dr. David Ogilvy died peacefully at Strath View, almost at the end of his eighty-

second year, and was buried in the same grave in the Kirriemuir cemetery as his adopted daughter. His will, it was found, had left her all he possessed, and had never been revised since her death. So Strath View and the rest of his estate passed, after the necessary legal formalities, to Alick Barrie, and presently—some time after his retirement in 1907—would become his permanent home. Not until this happened would our Barrie be seen in Kirriemuir again, though he had the ingenious notion of giving it to *Who's Who*, and other works of reference, as his only address. What this gained for him, except a couple of days' delay in receiving letters from strangers, isn't perhaps, quite clear. A bit of an ostrich, our Barrie, in some of the methods which he adopted for keeping his admirers at bay. And how he would have hated it if he had ever felt that they weren't there. . . .

"The Thousand Nightingales" goes on this summer, industriously but uncertainly. There was a vagueness about it, and about all the other ideas now, with which he struggled valiantly but which couldn't be shaken off. It looks as if some of the tremendous impetus were running down or growing tired, as indeed it well might after what it had done in the last few years. And life was puzzling him more, as he dodged in and out of it. So often there was the shadow now—it comes to others at forty-four, but why should it come to him?—of a new and deeper kind of mistrust. He tried to hide it, and then to hide from it, but still it persisted, even when he worked. Again, if only he could go back somehow. And then, for a while, there was a brief and almost successful effort to bring this off.

Alick's elder son, Charlie Barrie, who had done brilliantly—but so had his brother—at Edinburgh University, wanted to come to London and be a journalist. In a flash his uncle saw not only his own story being repeated, but himself taking a share in it. No thought of jealousy or dissuasion, in this instance at any rate, as the years rolled back and he felt what it would have meant to himself to have a literary London uncle at the top of the tree. So Charlie must be got on to a newspaper and then, though Furnivals Inn had gone now, he must live in chambers in the Temple or somewhere like that. Tremendous enthusiasm and excitement, and an appeal to the faithful Gilmour, who almost immediately fulfilled the first part of the programme by using his influence with the *Morning Post*. Charlie could learn his new job there—without pay, but his uncle would attend to all that. And presently he was even in

chambers in Gray's Inn, and was clever enough in everything except the impossible task of making his own career and reproducing someone else's at the same time. Here was the inevitable disappointment, in the kindness that wanted to arrange everything, and the ambition that naturally wanted to go its own way. There were clashes, as was inevitable, too. Presently Charlie would take a post in Manchester, and marry there, again without letting his uncle choose his wife; and Barrie would groan, and be long-suffering and exigent, and generous and obstinate, not only for the rest of Charlie's lifetime—for both he and his brother were killed in the war—but long afterwards with the family that was left behind. These are private affairs, and that's quite enough of them. But there was the beginning of a tragi-comedy, which would presently have too much tragedy, in the autumn of 1904.

And so, as the days draw in, and Barrie recovers from the first of his seasonable colds, we return to the Duke of York's. Boucicault had been busy for weeks already, organising the tremendous adventure to which he and his chief were pledged. Pantomime, spectacle, and indeed something of almost everything else must be blended into the production, yet the spirit of the nursery must never be forgotten. Somehow the heavy and elaborate sets must all be fitted into the narrow stage, space must be left for the flying, and an exceptional number of trap-doors must be cut. Then there must be music, composed so admirably by the croaking Mr. Crook. Dances, to be arranged by the inimitable Willie Warde. A vast wardrobe, much of it to be made from designs by William Nicholson—his were the pirates', the redskins', and the lost boys' Esquimaux outfits—while Henry Ford (Artists and Allahakbarries) did the drawing for Peter himself. The animals; dog (thirty guineas for Nana's mask and coat), crocodile, ostrich, wolves, and—during rehearsals, but the public never saw them—an eagle and a cat. The properties, almost all to be specially made. New tricks with the lighting. Detail, detail, and more detail to be thought out, and prepared, and tested, and checked. A company of fifty, twenty-four of them with speaking parts—that's to say if you count Nana's bark. All to be ready by the date that had already been chosen, yet nearly all a new experiment for everyone concerned; and the author, it must be admitted, still experimenting or having fresh inspirations day after day.

Here are some of the original cast. Miss Nina Boucicault as Peter

Pan. Gerald du Maurier doubling as Mr. Darling and Captain Hook. Miss Dorothea Baird—from *The Wedding Guest*, and very nearly from *Little Mary*, but she had had a baby instead—as Mrs. Darling. Miss Hilda Trevelyan, plucked from an autumn tour of the latter play (where she had been taking Miss Boucicault's part) as the first and to all true believers the only Wendy. "There will never be another to touch you," wrote Barrie, sixteen years later; and there never can be.

Arthur Lupino as Nana. Miss Jane Wren—now and always, also here and everywhere else, for she was only the darting reflection from a spotlight—as Tinker Bell. Miss Joan Burnett—the "little mother" from *The Wedding Guest* again, who would almost certainly have starred for Barrie if her fate had allowed—as Tootles. Miss Christine Silver as Nibs. A. W. Baskcomb still on the threshold of his comedian's career, as Slightly. Miss Pauline Chase—of whom we shall see and hear more, undoubtedly, before very long—as the First Twin. George Shelton, from *Ibsen's Ghost*, and *Walker, London*, and *Quality Street*, as Smee—and hereafter never to be thought of, by anybody who had seen him in the character, as anyone else.

And those other faithful pirates who would turn up year after year now, each Christmas-time—some of them until they left a wider scene. Charles Trevor, promoted from Cookson to Starkey during the first season, and holding his new rank for many a revival after that. Or Frederick Annerley, or James English, or John Kelt. John Kelt, whose real name was Eric Forbes-Robertson—he was Sir Johnston's brother—in the end never played anything else but the almost silent part of Noodler, which he had created. The tall, bearded, petticoated pirate in the long blue coat, who waggled his Forbes-Robertson fingers when he danced the hornpipe. You remember him? He would vanish completely when the spring tour was over, yet always reappear—for thirty years—when the next rehearsals were called. Barrie had a thrill, by the way, when he was hunting for these pirates's names. He got hold of a book on the subject, and there, along with the names that he picked out and used, was Israel Hands. Picked out, more than twenty years earlier, by R. L. S. for *Treasure Island*. One of Flint's men. And so truth and fiction, piracy and literary Scotchmen, were again linked and bridged.

For six weeks of November and December order was conjured



out of chaos by Boucicault and his henchmen at the Duke of York's, while Miss Lillies constantly revived them with cups of tea. Mrs. Barrie once more extraordinarily useful with hints and help; we mustn't ever forget that. Honoured friends—Arthur and Sylvia Davies among them—looking in and seeing the fantastic preparations gradually taking shape. Barrie now with special kindnesses and attention to some of the children, and to anyone else, of course, who was pretty. That's where Miss Chase starts coming in, who was as pretty as they're made, and whom Frohman was so fond of. The beginning of a lifelong friendship here. Almost a child herself still, and in those days unmistakably American, she had danced in her pink pyjamas in a New York musical comedy—which was how she originated what all First Twins would do for a long time yet. But she herself would be doing much more than this inside another couple of years.

There were no mermaids for there was no lagoon scene, in 1904, though they're there in the earliest notes, and were only waiting their chance to slip in. On the other hand, as again may be remembered, there was a scene near the end of the play where the lost boys met and identified their Beautiful Mothers; Tiger-Lily had a much larger and more important part—though also more uncomfortable, for she was shamelessly in love with Peter; and the present second and fourth acts were linked, so as to form one act, by a front-scene in which there was very little dialogue but a good deal of dancing for the Redskins and both Twins. Improvised at rehearsals—like the scene of Starkey in captivity (which Barrie wouldn't print with the rest of the play)—so that the whole performance might fall, as it did this year, into three acts. Improvisation, in fact, was a constant necessity at these first rehearsals, when the author had put in so much that no one but Boucicault could have translated into theatrical practice at all. He had let himself go this time, leaving everything to be worked out by the experts; yet they all rose to it, as Boucicault dashed between stage and stalls, as he danced, acted, tugged the players into the right positions, shouted to his assistants, and was in turn an Indian, or a wolf, a pirate or any one of a dozen other characters himself. Fine times for Barrie and fine fun, as he watched and smoked, or scribbled the lines that would fill in some technically necessary gap. Several kinds of dream, in a way, as all these resources were put at his disposal, and as the games with the little Davieses were renewed in this strange and extraordinary

atmosphere; with their uncle—though Gerald would always think some of it rather silly—now joining in the adventures too. To others, also, these longer and longer rehearsals were becoming like a dream now, for they were too close to their own bit of responsibility to guess what sort of a play was being born. Not Boucicault. He, who was responsible for everything, could still see the goal. But the mystical figure in overalls who kept on murmuring "The gallery boys won't stand it"—and is immortalised for this saying in the published Dedication—wasn't the only one who was aware of the chaos and the strangeness, and of little else.

But they all went on working, as they always did when Boucicault was in charge, even though they fell asleep in their dressing-rooms or emerged into the long alley that leads to the Duke of York's stage-door without really knowing whether it were night or day. Right through Christmas and Boxing-Day they worked, for the first night was to be on December 27th; yet in one respect even Boucicault was beaten in the end. The last two scenes, which had been written and altered so often—and in one of which, up to the last moment, the eagle was to have flown out over the audience, and then to have caught Captain Hook and dropped him to the crocodile—just couldn't be ready in time. The mechanism for raising the Little House to the Tree-Tops wasn't ready, nor the method for getting a third heavy and elaborate set into the last act. They could have been, if the author hadn't changed his mind so often. But even Frohman's faith and Boucicault's skill and ingenuity were subject to a few practical laws, and as the house was sold out for the first night, and as Frohman would never allow a production to be postponed, the scene in the tree-tops and the scene leading up to it must both be cut.

They were; though by the following week, and in spite of daily matinées, they were in again—without the eagle, for meanwhile Hook's fate had been thrown back with the last improvisation that still remains. But for that first-night audience, on Tuesday, December 27th, 1904, *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, ended with the second scene in the Darlings' nursery, and with Peter giving a last, heart-breaking look through the window as the curtain fell.

What a night, though. The audience gave their first astonished and delighted yell when the Newfoundland nurse took Michael Nicholas Darling's night-clothes off the nursery fender, and from

this instant they never resisted the magic again. They were all grown-ups, of course a lot of them were professional critics, and two members at least—we're coming to them in a moment—seem to have represented the minority that would always exist. But to-night, as one odd, fanciful demand on their imagination or credulity succeeded another, that audience did more than play its part. It is hard to conceive, now that the story is known to every child in its own nursery, how completely unprepared they must have been for what they saw and heard; but there was no need—as had cunningly been planned—for the orchestra to lead the applause at the question: "Do you believe in Fairies?" The audience didn't believe in them for a moment, but they'd do anything to-night for Barrie. Even the exhausted company realised through the mists that something special was happening, though none of them dreamt that it was more than the beginning of a successful, pantomime-season run. No doubt of the success, though; no doubt about those curtain-calls, and the roaring from the front of the house. Barrie, of course, was in hiding again. Boucicault, though more dead than alive, was still everywhere at once, for his work on this play was still unfinished—and never would be finished so long as he and it were associated. Charles Frohman, three thousand miles away, was still waiting for Lestocq's telegram, and whiling away the time by describing (which in his case always meant acting) some of the scenes to a friend who was keeping him company. And then it came—telephoned through to his house at White Plains from the office in New York.

*"Peter Pan* all right. Looks like big success."

The luck had held. The gamble had come off. With a production on that scale, a cast of that size, and an author drawing ten per cent on the gross takings, C.F.'s own share in the triumph might yet and for a long time be more a matter of glory than of pounds or dollars. But this was the last kind of thought to enter his head. The play with which he had fallen in love was going to live now. He'd bring it to America. Better still, at the moment, he would be seeing it himself at the Duke of York's, whatever his American commitments and engagements, in a month or two at the outside. So he gloated, and cabled congratulations, and hugged the rich happiness which his courage or infatuation had earned him. There would never be any other play to touch it, for him.

Thus the long theatrical legend started, in the last week of the year

1904. Volumes could be written on all that it has meant to generation after generation of playgoers of all ages; on what it has added to English and American imagery, and literature, and language; and on the ten thousand and one details of its inner history, as the ripples began leaving St. Martin's Lane and then spread all over the earth. But this is the biography of the man who wrote it, who assured us afterwards that he couldn't remember writing it, and was telling the truth to this extent—that though he had put his heart and soul and all his thoughts into it, something deeper and still more individual had actually guided his pen. An alchemy, as mysterious and often as disturbing to him as to anyone else, which had taken his own sadness and nostalgia for childhood, his games with the little Davieses, and thirty years of constant if not always conscious pre-occupation with the stage, and had turned them into dialogue and direction, and three hours of magic, utterly different from anything yet known.

But welcomed and recognised now, and almost unanimously, by the Press and the public alike. Queues at the box-office, and addicts already beginning to join them even as they emerged from a matinée. Only a play, of course; a sentimental play; a play, as they would say nowadays, of escape; and a play, if one stops to think, with cruelty in it as well as charm and beauty. It didn't alter anything. It righted no wrongs, and solved no problems. It didn't pretend to face a single objective or material fact. It was whimsical, if you like, for the word can't be avoided for ever. But there it was, again at the right hour, with the right manager, the right producer, the right players, the right scene-painters, dress-designers, and musical composer. Success. No break in the astonishing record of luck. Mr. J. M. Barrie not only in the top class now, but slipping quietly, and with an only slightly deceptive air of having done the whole thing purely to please himself, into a class that was entirely his own.

Of course there were always, and always would be, the Barriephobes; the ones who suddenly heard the rest of an audience sniffing and gulping, who had succeeded in growing up themselves, or who felt, honestly enough, that if they had failed, they still shouldn't be encouraged not to try. Some for whom sentiment is always a red rag; or others, so sensitively sentimental themselves, that moments in *Peter Pan*, and other works by the same author, made them long for the ground to open under their feet. Two members of that first-night audience—the two that we were coming

to in a moment—hardly fell into the last-named category; but a touch of astringency, a frank admission that even J. M. Barrie never conquered the whole world, may be no bad way of closing a section in his story where there has been so much triumph and praise.

George Edwardes, the musical-comedy impresario of Daly's and the Gaiety, and more than once a partner of Frohman's, was one of them. "Well," he was heard saying, as he left the theatre, and with a puzzled expression on his florid face: "if that's the sort of thing the public want, I suppose we'll have to give it 'em."

But Anthony Hope—a friend, a true friend, yet pledged always to his own and far more Attic interpretation of life—sat there looking primmer and drier at every extravagance, and more and more as if, in his opinion, children should be kept in their right place. When he spoke, his comment was also far more succinct. "Oh, for an hour of Herod!" he said. And this passes gently into part of the legend, too.

## 18

1905 now. A letter, early in January, tells us what we might perhaps have guessed. "These *Peter Pan* rehearsals have given me a month's headache. I see plainly that one can't write books and plays alternately or anything of that kind. One's ideas all get into the way of seeking for the one outlet, and so at present they form with me into acts." But then it goes on: "How thankful we should be when we sit down to the desk that we can work with some pleasure to ourselves. The great thing."

Or in other words, no slackening in the effort, though the notes are becoming increasingly chaotic. "If only one could dispose of that large assortment of second-class ideas for one first-class idea." No question, however, about the scale and scope of the assortment. It's impossible to keep up with it now, as the fancies dart and whirl, or start and break off. Another visit to Coventry, to hear Mason, supported by Sir Edward Grey, still conducting his campaign, produces an idea for "Skit on fiscal question," which may be heard of again. Here or hereabouts, also, is already the first outline of *Dear Brutus*, which will be discussed, partly written, and then thrown aside. A play about Punch, and another about a Clown and Pantaloon, both of which will also go further. "The Ladies' Shakespeare

—extra last act to *Taming of Shrew* (showing Katharina was playing with Petruchio).” This, already intended for Miss Adams, will lurk and be toyed with for a long time, and finally reach the boards in America. And more politics or political sidelights, some of which will go into *What Every Woman Knows*.

These are the ideas whose fortunes can be traced, but there are a dozen others, for each one of them, that failed to satisfy and fell by the way. Plenty of work, but constant uncertainty. Something seems to have happened to the mind that could once pin its faith to even flimsier beginnings, and wrestle through to the end. One-act plays keep on tempting it, though by this time there was far less demand for them. It seems that the thought of anything longer is something that for the moment can hardly be faced. Not exactly because of the trouble, but because nothing will stay for more than half an hour or so on the same track. Even *What Every Woman Knows* is feeling this; keeps breaking into bits, and being joined together; still only grows, and very slowly, as a whole, because none of the pieces is quite enough by itself. Barrie, completely free now to write as he chooses, is tired and is missing the old urgency and discipline. But still it doesn't occur to him to leave the writing and all the extraordinary ideas alone. Or he doesn't do it. Or he can't.

He was a great deal at the Duke of York's during that first season of *Peter Pan*. The mechanism and tricks of the production fascinated him, though he never hesitated to disclose them to anybody—even to a child—who was interested. He put on the flying-harness once, and was whirled through the air. He loved watching this play from the wings. And then he had established himself in a curious relationship to the company, with special friends and favourites, and long sessions of story-telling in the dressing-rooms. He was still having inspirations and afterthoughts, too, so that the prompt-copy became more and more a mass of corrections, and even Boucicault never quite knew what some character might be told to say next. But of course he could do what he liked here. For no author in any theatre has ever had such a free hand.

*Peter Pan* ran with daily matinées—twelve performances a week—through the holiday season, and thereafter, with three matinées or nine performances, until April 1st; thus beating the Drury Lane pantomime of 1904-5 by several lengths. Its withdrawal was announced with the simultaneous intimation that it would be revived in December, and that seats—a Frohman touch, this—could

be booked throughout the year. For C. F. had seen it by now—tearing over a full month before the usual date of his arrival; had sat in Box F, acting gently with hands and feet, murmuring the words under his breath, and swallowing the magic once more as even he became another strange sort of child. And did C. F. believe in Fairies? He clapped vigorously and violently. He'd be there again in a night or two. He would never grow tired of this play. Indeed he would have been quite capable of ordering a revival entirely for his own pleasure; but for this, already, there was less than no need.

He would be seeing it again, in fact, even sooner than December, for here as well as his favourite among all plays was another vehicle for Miss Adams. New York production in the autumn, then, with all the extravagant outlay repeated. And at this moment, for him but still more for Barrie, fresh rehearsals at the Duke of York's. There was no tour of *Peter Pan* this first year, and some of the company were going straight into the new bill. *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*, sub-titled *A Page from a Daughter's Diary*, and before it a one-act play, though in two scenes, which Barrie had only finished in the last few weeks. *Pantaloön, or A Plea for an Ancient Family*; one of the ideas that had come to him about Christmas-time, and with enough clearness and impetus to be dashed off almost at once.

Boucicault producing, of course. A. W. Baskcomb, or Slightly, in the first piece, as Clown. Gerald du Maurier as Pantaloön. Willîe Warde, the dancer, as Harlequin. Little Miss Ela Q. May, the first Liza from *Peter Pan*, as the Child. And Miss Pauline Chase, staggeringly pretty and lighter than thistledown, as Columbine. For the three-act *Alice*, Miss Ellen Terry was of course in the title-rôle. Miss Irene Vanbrugh was her daughter. Her real daughter, Miss Edith Craig, and Miss Hilda Trevelyan played the smaller parts of servants—but Miss Trevelyan's at least gave her a short and well-taken chance. While Aubrey Smith was Alice's husband, Kenneth Douglas was her innocent and imaginary lover, and A. E. Matthews—ageless as ever—was her son. He also had far the best line in what, in another moment, we shall have to admit was a curiously feeble and foolish play. Though if it could only have gone on like this—for it was the first line—there would at any rate have been sparkle in the squib.

But there wasn't. Barrie himself had a stubborn affection for it; you will remember how last summer he had given it to Frohman

as the play that was to make up all the losses on *Peter Pan*. He also deliberately included it in the collected edition, and could point by that time to moderately successful runs in London and New York, to some moderately successful tours, and even to a revival in the former capital, though only for a couple of months. There was something, then, that he saw in this simple satire on contemporary stage triangles; some secret pleasure in mocking at what, even then, was hardly worth mockery. And Frohman, who could no longer judge anything that the author wrote except through the author's eyes, went a long way towards sharing these illusions, too. But though on April 5th the first-night audience were enchanted by the gaiety and sentiment of the curtain-raiser; were by this time in the best possible mood for what followed; and greeted that opening line—"All I can say is that if father tries to kiss me, I shall kick him"—with rapturous laughter and applause, from this moment the evening inevitably sagged and drooped.

Miss Terry, though never for a moment the least like a mem-sahib, made herself loved at once; for again she couldn't do anything else. Miss Vanbrugh, compelled to behave like a virtual imbecile, very nearly made even this character sympathetic too. And everyone else did their skilful best. But the story was so unutterably silly. Girl who goes to too many plays thinks her mother is keeping an illicit assignation, takes her place, has her face saved by the mother who really ought to have slapped her. And that's all—except that further detail only provides further silliness. An impossible and incredible family. Barrie apparently under the impression that audiences were also so steeped in the theatre that it would amuse them to see three acts in which he poked fun at it. Barrie not knowing or caring that ten minutes of this sort of burlesque is quite enough at a time. And Barrie amazed and indignant as the temperature of the house fell lower and lower, and never rose again.

He was there, in the box, with Frohman, and the legend is that as they both realised what was happening, Barrie insisted on foregoing or at least modifying his fees. That Frohman wouldn't hear of this. That Barrie still insisted, and finally carried his point. That the princely Frohman thereupon sent him an unimaginably large and expensive cabinet of cigars—and that the caretaker at Leinster Corner finished them all off while the Barries were down at Black Lake. As this story comes from the author, it shows that in the end,



as we should expect, he recovered his detachment or poise. But *Alice*—even though Walkley, who was now as infatuated as Frohman, gave it a glowing send-off—was never a real success. The reputation of the author and his leading lady, and a certain amount of curiosity as to what they were doing together and for each other, kept it going for the best part of four months. But never to very big business, and though at each performance *Pantaloon* was lapped up and loved, always there was bewilderment and disappointment at the main piece. "I was never happy in my part," Miss Terry wrote afterwards, "perhaps because although it had been made to measure, it didn't fit me. I sometimes felt that I was bursting the seams! I was accustomed to broader work in a larger theatre."

Actually, as we know, it had only been altered and adjusted so as to fit her; but it never did, for Ellen Terry could never have had that kind of patience with a fool. Or that kind of patience with that kind of fool. The result was that though the author was perpetually representing her as the most marvellous of mothers, in fact she also often appeared to lack even ordinary sense. It wasn't a fair part for anyone. And though Miss Terry could still transport her admirers by filling an empty rôle with nothing but herself, here there was the worse handicap of having to be herself and someone else at the same time. No wonder she felt the seams were bursting, as all her tricks and training blew this preposterous mother to bits. So much, and enough now, for *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* in the spring and early summer of 1905.

Three nights after the opening performance, or on Saturday, April 8th, Barrie was speaking at another dinner. The scene was the Trocadero. The occasion a complimentary banquet to the, alas, no longer mighty Greenwood, more or less in honour of his seventy-fifth birthday. Barrie's idea, and Barrie as Chairman of the organising committee, which had included Meredith, Hardy, and Andrew Lang. A large and distinguished gathering, with John Morley presiding and delivering the main eulogy. But after Greenwood had responded, Barrie got up and told the story of the top-hat. Nicoll, who was also present, called this little speech "the careless effort of genius;" and perhaps one might say that it took genius to make it quite so autobiographical, but one can be quite certain that there was no lack of preparation and care. Poor Greenwood, fetched up from Sydenham for this orgy of praise, yet knowing that his day

was over, and that quite half of those who were thumping the tables could only look on him in this light. A strange reward or revenge from the little Scotch journalist whom he had advised to stay in Scotland, though of course there had been nothing but kindness in the plan. When it was all over, he returned to his meagre retirement, and dreamt his dreams for nearly five more years. No more banquets, though, as Fleet Street still roared and thundered over his editorial grave. And when he died, his daughters, also, must have a pittance from the Civil List.

The Barries were in Normandy this Easter, with Sylvia Davies and Jack and Michael, while Arthur took George and Peter elsewhere. It wasn't quite right somehow—except that Barrie could see nothing wrong. Or it wasn't helping a situation which others, at least, must judge by the ordinary rules. But it happened, and nothing else happened as yet. Only a little more tension in the midst of the hospitality, and the expeditions, and the fun. And some time this spring he must have been in Nottingham, for there is a sudden note among all the rest. "Nottingham revisited. Chief thing that struck me was that there were women in it." Just twenty years since he had left it, and if this were the chief thing that struck him, we, at any rate, have a memory of that drive in a victoria, and know that the difference—even if he hadn't just invented it—was only one of degree. He was thinking, of course, of the past loneliness now, but there had never been a time, since the pink and white and blue little girls at Dumfries, when he hadn't noticed pretty faces or backs in the street.

Then the notes go on again. "Cinderella play." The idea is beginning to haunt him, and especially the idea of a fairy god-mother much more maternal than in the ordinary fairy-book or pantomime versions. But it will be twelve years, and in the middle of a war that will run right through its texture, before this play and its public meet. "Schoolboy." That's another frequent heading. But it isn't Primus now, the schoolboy in the *St. James's Gazette* and *My Lady Nicotine*, but George Davies, and sometimes bits of Jack, at Berkhamsted. Articles or a series of sketches seem to be the notion, but nothing, in the end, goes further than the notes. "Theatrical." That's also constantly cropping up. Mocking little anecdotes of actors' conceit. He can't leave them alone, though even the notes imply that the whole subject is beneath contempt. But then he's an actor himself, of course, and as he flays them—but

again, in the end, only in private—there is always, perhaps, just a touch of this rueful realisation. It is they who say and do these preposterous things, but there is sympathy as well as cruelty in the hand that jots them down.

"Play. The Fool. (Collaborate with Hewlett?)." This, it seems, would have been historical; a play about a woman-jester—there was one once—at a medieval court. Hewlett, of course, to supply the background and colour. Barrie to do what? Heaven knows, for again it went no further; though even we, for a fleeting moment, can see it all. "Play. 'The Cow.' " Tagg's Island turning up again. The cow is to be a "large, placid, stupid woman," though as the entries go on we find that all these qualities are supposed to be admired. Can you imagine it? Charles Frohman presents *The Cow*, by J. M. Barrie. Would he have done it? Would half or more than half the audience have risen and screamed for the author's blood? The cow, indeed! But it was no knowledge of this obvious and appalling risk that saved him, no thought of any insult to his favourite sex. Merely that the plot drifted off into another blind-alley, and couldn't be extricated, and was left there as the author passed on.

To this. Not at once, but definitely in the same year. "Hogg's Queen's Wake—a sort of Rip van Winkle." Are you there? Have you got it? Fifteen years, this time, for this thought to incubate, to come and go, to find its gradual way towards *Mary Rose*. But it is in James Hogg's *Queen's Wake*, as the thirteenth Bard's Song, that the poem or ballad of *Kilmeny* appears.

"For Kilmeny had been she ken'd not where  
And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare."

The magical, metrical version of an almost ubiquitous Scottish legend—though there is plenty of evidence of the same, mysterious thing happening to young men as well as to young women all over the north. They vanish, for varying periods, and then, when all hope of ever seeing them again has been abandoned, they suddenly return. They haven't aged, and they remember nothing. The fairies have taken them, have shared their lives with them, and then perhaps have tired of them, wiped out all memory of the months or years in fairyland, and put them back where they first disappeared. Barrie, then, was on to this legend, as a possible subject for his own

treatment, at least as early as 1905. And he was on to the subject of *Dear Brutus*. And on to another treatment of the story of Cinderella. This—for we know that *The Adored One* had already suggested its first and only important act, and that he was already at work on *What Every Woman Knows*—covers every full-length play, except the last, that he was still to write. No sign in a sense—Heaven knows—that the playwright had exhausted himself. Yet from 1905 onwards there will be no more sudden, fresh discoveries in the little box. Plenty of trifles still lurking at the bottom, and jewels, without doubt, amongst them. But for the rest he will still be turning over or amusing himself or working on what he has already found there. Save, again, for the last play; which, whatever its other qualities, never came out of the little box at all.

This was the spring or summer, also, when Mrs. Barrie took a studio in Kensington, and began turning her quickness and cleverness to enamel-work. Her husband noted the address, but if he noted anything else, it could make no difference. He knew so well what it was like now to be bored and restless himself, and if people didn't write, then no doubt they did something else. The ever-present onlookers, who perhaps could hardly help their position, were anxious and irritated, or saw something pathetic here and then wished that they hadn't. But one didn't discuss such things with a man of such devastating reserve, or such paralysing methods of showing it. Nor with a woman whose look of challenge, whatever was beneath or behind it, was still an unbroken defence. Nobody else's affair, then, except, one is afraid, in murmurs and whispers. Yet all quite inescapable, because of a character who just couldn't and wouldn't face what only for others were facts.

Frohman was still at Savoy Court this summer, and now another of his American stars was in London as well. Miss Ethel Barrymore; with theatrical blood in every vein; brilliant, fascinating, and immensely popular—not only on Broadway. Still in her radiant twenties. Now—for Miss Adams was already preparing herself for *Peter Pan*, and Frohman didn't want *Alice* to miss the New York season—she was to be in a Barrie play, too. Confirmed by the author, who found her quite as fascinating as anyone else. An arrangement not wholly welcomed or approved by Miss Adams, who, whether there were grounds or not, must always feel that both Barrie and his plays were her own. Yet Frohman's ingenuity had dealt with worse problems than this; and though even a couple of

years ago he would at least have hesitated over the other problem of a middle-aged heroine who couldn't possibly be reduced to minor rank, now he cut straight through the knot. Tact, immense knowledge of how to handle stars, a little conspiracy with Barrie; and behold, Miss Barrymore should test both her talents and her admirers by appearing as the mother of a grown-up daughter in Miss Terry's part. Here, then, was the beginning of another long association and chapter in American stage history. And here also, at the end of June, was Miss Barrymore among the Allahakbarries at Black Lake.

Staying actually, though as the Barries' guest, at an inn in Farnham, where the Anthony Hopes, Mason, and two or three other members—including a new one, in the shape of Harry Graham—were also quartered. But they all came over every day for the games and festivities, and to join the Hewletts, the Lucases, and Sylvia Davies and Michael, who were staying at the Cottage. June 30th—the golf-croquet tournament and other competitive events. July 1st, or the Saturday—another defeat from Edgar Horne and his eleven at Shackleford. But on Monday, July 3rd—with the captain again playing with a bat that had been given him by C. B. Fry—there was a most notable victory over the Artists. Allahakbarries, 250 for 6, declared. Artists all out for 101. A triumphant return to the house and garden in the pine-woods, a banquet to celebrate their prowess, and once more the party began breaking up. Edgar Horne took some photographs on the Saturday, and looking at them now—so long afterwards—we can't help feeling that it was indeed another age. It isn't only that the men are all looking so young still, that several are wearing straw hats, that Barrie himself has one of those belts which cricketers have now, for some reason, discarded. It isn't only that Michael Davies, who was five now, is dressed so that in these days he would almost certainly be taken for a little girl. In the background of one of the groups, and therefore slightly out of focus, two female figures are walking under the trees. Their waists, their long skirts, their enormous, floppy hats—it is these, though there is now no hope of identifying either figure, that speak so clearly and sadly of the graceful, peaceful past. Perhaps one of them was Sylvia Davies. Perhaps neither of them comes into this story at all. But for the moment that is quite immaterial. Their faces and even their outlines are blurred; yet it is they who haunt us, for it is they, far more than the belts or straw boaters, that tell

us how long ago it is since 1905. And what we have lost. And how little we have gained.

It's true. It's indisputable. Yet of course, and as always, there is something else that the camera never saw. The men are smiling, and Barrie's look at Michael, so infinitely proud and tender, can still be seen without gazing too far ahead. But we know, nevertheless, that on Monday, when they all turn out again to beat the Artists, the real Allahakbarries will be playing their last match. It was in September of '87 that they started, all but eighteen years ago, and of course that's a long time for any such series of games to go on. We know also that but for the captain's extraordinary and persistent enthusiasm, nothing could possibly have kept them alive. Yet it wasn't because Barrie was forty-five now, or had lost any of his love for these boyish days in the country, that the series had come to an end. Tragedy, destiny, and a special and vindictive Nemesis would dissolve the Allahakbarries, though sparing all their lives. These were waiting in the wings now, and wouldn't be satisfied until they had struck, not once, but again and again. No wonder those old photographs make us sad and uneasy in more ways than one. For the little central figure, in his white cricketing-cap and snake-linked belt, is to know something worse and far more relentless, before long, than the mere bludgeonings of chance.

Another long summer at Black Lake—while that caretaker at Leinster Corner disposes of Frohman's cigars; but not much contact with the Davieses, who had taken a holiday house at Rustington again. Work on all the ideas at once, but particularly on a revised version of *Peter Pan*—bringing in the mermaids and turning out the Beautiful Mothers—which will be used by Miss Adams at the Empire before it is first seen at the Duke of York's. Already there are notes for an extra act or scene, in which Wendy is to be grown up and Peter still, of course, a child. And presently this also will be seen—but for one performance only—before it becomes the last chapter of *Peter and Wendy* as a book. *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*, which closed in London at the end of July, is to go on tour in September, with Miss Terry and some of the others. It is in Birmingham, in fact, on the 13th of October, when another last chapter suddenly shakes the whole English-speaking world.

Death of Henry Irving. Worn out, at sixty-seven, by the years of work, and strain, and successive misfortune. No longer king of the

Lyceum, which he had pledged and lost. A last performance, at Bradford, of *Becket*. Collapse. Back somehow to his hotel; and it's all over—in the hall there—before they can move him upstairs. Heart failure in harness. The end of an era, and of a reign, though his kingdom was gone. Thousands are deeply stirred, and with an undercurrent of human and hidden complications public honour must still be paid. Now crowds are filing past his ashes in the Piccadilly house of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. And then, just a week after his death, the organised tribute of a funeral in Westminster Abbey.

Barrie was there among the ticket-holders, though seeing everything, again, in his own way. And again preparing to make notes. Of Arthur Collins—Augustus Harris's successor at the *Lanc*—and his fantastically incongruous comment, "Alas, poor Yorick." Of leading actresses kissing each other "with awful meaning." Of an actor exclaiming, at a sudden shaft of sunlight: "My God, that's great! Is that artificial?"—and then weeping. Of George Alexander "looking heavenwards." Yes, a critical observer, or an observer whose emotions couldn't alter what he had observed. Fourteen years since the dead hero had forced Toole to take *Ibsen's Ghost*, and now Toole—with less than a year to live—was a helpless invalid at Brighton. Actors. No, there should be no acting except by pretty women and clever children. Yet Irving, despite *The Professor's Love Story* and despite this present mummery, was still the exception to the rule. A faint jingle of sleigh-bells, first heard, but never forgotten, in Edinburgh. A patron of the Dumfries Academy Amateur Dramatic Club now lying in Poets' Corner. Memories; but loyal memories now always stronger than anything else. Irving safe in another niche now, and again a distinctly proprietary Barrie to guard it even from his scathing and squeamish self.

*Peter Pan* had its first American performance in Washington at the end of October, with Frohman, of course, on the scene. Miss Adams, though she stuck to what was already beginning to be known as a Peter Pan collar, had devised a different dress—a tunic and breeches sprinkled with painted leaves, cross-garters, and a hat with a feather in it, rather like Robin Hood's. This was only one sign of the intense and almost consecrated preparation which she had given to the impossible part; impossible, that's to say, in the sense of any genuine physical illusion. From this point of view she

remained, and was bound to remain, Miss Maude Adams; and plays and theatres being what they are, it would have been fatal if she had actually transformed herself into anything else. But she was still enormously popular, she still had every gift for binding an audience with her own spell, and no one could possibly have transmitted more of the all but religious enthusiasm that she felt. Yes, there was a trace of this rather unexpected quality in her Peter, but she was an American playing to Americans, she knew just what she was doing, and she was obviously and overwhelmingly sincere. Again, as a matter of fact, there was a little uncertainty about this preliminary canter—Washington, apparently, feeling slightly out of its distinguished depth. But Frohman's real object, of course, had been to add the last touches of polish, and at the New York opening—at the Empire Theatre, on November 6th—there was hardly a moment's doubt. No doubt at all by the middle of the evening. Another smash-hit for Frohman, Adams, and Barrie; fresh records broken; and a continuous run—the longest in the history of this theatre—until the following June 9th.

After which, tours, and more tours; as far almost, at the moment, as the eye can reach. No feeling in America, apparently, that this was only or essentially a play for children—as it most certainly isn't—or that it could only be associated with Christmas. On it goes now, all over the United States; and whatever some of it means to audiences in the Middle West, or the Far West, or at any other distance from the Black Lake woods and Kensington Gardens, the United States swallow everything whole. They become nursery-conscious, fairy-conscious, pirate-conscious. If some of them supposed that they were Redskin-conscious already, they eagerly accept this new light on the subject. The magic of the stories for the little Davieses is spreading far more widely than anything that could be likened to ripples in a pond. Wherever this play is given now, it is born and begins radiating again.

Frohman, in the meantime, had never been happier. He lived at the Hotel Knickerbocker, a few yards from the Empire, his offices were over it, and he could see his beloved play as often as he liked. The American stage-electricians, always ahead of the rest, had added several new effects, and these, of course, must instantly be reproduced at the Duke of York's. So particulars and equipment were sent over, and then, by this time, Boucicault and Barrie and all the rest of them were at work again, experimenting with the new



Lagoon scene in preparation for the reopening on December 19th. Or no; not all the rest. Miss Trevelyan was there, and Gerald was there—and so, of course, were the faithful pirates. But Miss Baird had gone, for the beautiful Miss Baird was one to whom acting had become an increasing burden and terror. And, alas, Miss Boucicault, whose exhausting part had nearly killed her last year, but who had rested and recovered and was prepared to face it again, had learnt now that another little boy, or actress, had taken her place. There were reasons, of course; though none of them could ever reflect either on her or what she had done. Barrie was now an autocrat, whose word and whose whims were law, and professionally speaking he could do anything for any actress that he chose. There was something, at any rate, that he saw as a reason in this case, and accordingly Miss Boucicault vanished—but will never be forgotten—and Miss Cecilia Loftus (whom the profession called Cissie) was rehearsing instead. So, in the smaller part of one of Tiger Lily's amazons, was one of his nieces—a daughter of Isabella Murray—to whom he was kind and helpful in more ways than this. There was no trouble at the box-office. The theatre was going to be just as tightly packed and crammed, at its twelve weekly performances, as a year ago.

In America Miss Adams's *Peter* was approaching its hundredth performance; while Miss Barrymore's *Alice*, preceded, as in London, by *Pantaloon*—and with her brother John in both plays—was to open at the New York Criterion on Christmas Day. Its run would be very much shorter; yet anything but a personal failure for the star, and both she and a secondary company would presently be out with it on tour. The theatre, however, wasn't everything, even for Barrie, at the end of 1905. There was another aspect of history, which he was now finding almost as fascinating, in his own way.

The Conservative Government, which for months had been losing by-elections with monotonous regularity, had at last resigned. The Liberals, united once more under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, had come into office, and a general election in January was fully expected to confirm the change. Mason, therefore, speaking himself hoarse at Coventry; Barrie repeatedly joining him there, sitting silently on his platforms, and at one moment taking note of his throat-spray—and of Winston Churchill's oxygen-bag—for subsequent use on the stage. Barrie, in fact, feeling very political again; considering and rejecting a proposal that he should stand for the

Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities himself; pumping more politics into a play called "The Labour Member," some of which will remain when it is grafted on to *What Every Woman Knows*. And then—in the midst of rehearsals and public meetings—Mason has suddenly found him a new hero and a new friend.

From another world; for Mason will always have wider interests and enthusiasms than whatever seems to be occupying him completely at the time. Significant introduction to Captain Robert Falcon Scott, of the Royal Navy, and commander of the *Discovery's* recent expedition, of 1901 to 1904, in the Antarctic. An explorer, you see, and as such within range, at any rate, since his return to England in September of last year, through either Gilmour or his father-in-law. But no actual encounter until now; and now, instantaneously, something more than a response on both sides. Here, for Barrie, was the bravest and manliest sailor in the world. There, from Scott, was such instant admiration—spurred on by all the tricks and all the spells—that he was captured and appropriated at once. Barrie looked up, but so, in one sense, did Scott; for he was fascinated, in the simplest and frankest manner, by Barrie's position and name. He gave him the book which he had written—the two-volume *Voyage of the Discovery*—and the other and smaller author fell on it, raced through it, and was intoxicated by it. That, indeed, was the life of his dreams, and as a sign of his ardent appreciation Scott must come with him to a rehearsal of *Peter Pan*. So Scott did, and was exhilarated and impressed. Was introduced, in turn, to the company, was distinctly fascinated by them too, was modest and irresistible, and found himself—though never forgetting the Navy or the Antarctic—admitted to a circle exceedingly remote from both. Barrie isn't going to let go now. Scott will be meeting Frohman, and staying at Black Lake Cottage, and appearing at another Farnham, in Buckinghamshire, to play golf-croquet—with Miss Pauline Chase coming over from her own cottage—in Haddon Chambers's garden. And Scott will extend his frank admiration to all. He also has an ingenuous and openly-expressed wish to get married; yet presently, while he and the others are still examining the state of his heart, a very old trick will be played on him, and he will find, to his own and everyone else's astonishment, that he is genuinely and authentically in love. So then he will realise how different this was from anything that he had imagined, and thus—but it is well known to the whole world

now—he will be extracted from an excess of magic, and his own, heroic story will go on.

That isn't just yet; and to the end he will always be one who sees in Barrie only the sides and impersonations that Barrie would wish. If his clear, sailor's eyes are puzzled, as they must be sometimes, then he looks through this bewilderment to what he feels and knows is the truth. Is it? If he thinks so, perhaps it is. But this is one of the punishments for genius, that it must always be subtle, and complicated, and move in the most extraordinary circles, even when it has found a friend who can treat it as a fixed star. Then there must be more suffering somewhere. And will be in this case, though in the end the genius can't hurt the sailor, and the sailor will reward the genius with a posthumous and incomparable prize. Meanwhile, Scott is thirty-seven still, and will have nearly four more years in the Admiralty and at sea before he sets sail again for the South Pole.

Yes, Farnham Common was the full name of that other Farnham, and presently Miss Chase will be taking another and more permanent cottage there, and calling it "Tree-Tops." No name, perhaps, for a cottage belonging to a First Twin, but then she isn't going to be a First Twin much longer. For Frohman and Barrie both have an eye on her, are both proprietary and paternal—though Barrie, of course, will see himself in several other characters as well—and her chance is coming in a very few weeks. Already, in fact, "Play for Pauline"—though none ever actually emerged from either of the two studies—occurs more than once as an entry in the notebook. But wait a moment. Though this in 1906 now, Miss Loftus's rather mournful interpretation of Peter is still helping to pack the Duke of York's, and Barrie has gone up to Coventry again, accompanied by E. V. Lucas, to share, it is almost confidently hoped, in Mason's electoral triumph.

The actual polling date was January 16th, but at that period a general election still lasted the best part of three weeks, and by this time the Liberals had been romping in for several days. Auguries, in other words, of the best and brightest, though it was a Conservative seat, and—but perhaps this cut both ways—the division was notoriously corrupt. Mason, picturesque and rosetted, rousing thunderous cheers for Free Trade. Barrie and Lucas constantly in his wake, and finding a good deal to laugh at in the middle of

everything else. Grand tour of the committee-rooms and polling-booths. A considerable amount of good, old-fashioned drunkenness to add to the excitement and noise. Now the votes are being counted, with Lucas as an official teller, but Barrie still preferring to smoke, prow! and look on. The piles of paper run along the tables, but Mason is just ahead. Is he safe yet? It looks like it. His margin increases. They've nearly finished. He's in!

Majority of one thousand and ninety-two. Another Liberal gain. Mr. A. E. W. Mason is now member of Parliament for Coventry—and will be joined presently, in this astonishing landslide, by Mr. Hilaire Belloc as Liberal member for South Salford—but in this hour of victory, with all its hand-shakings, slaps on the back, and urgent yells from the waiting crowds outside, Mr. A. E. W. Mason realises that he has entirely lost his voice. If he can manage one audible sentence, it will be something of a miracle; yet it is unthinkable and impossible that he shouldn't try. A roar from the crowd, then, as the conqueror appears. He flings out his arms. "My constituents!" he cries, with one last, supreme effort. That concludes his address to the electors; but Barrie has also heard him, and it is with these same brief but effective words that Maggie Wylie will bring down the curtain, after John Shand's election, in the second act of *What Every Woman Knows*.

Here is a letter, in February, 1906, to a London friend of about ten years' standing. "May I come to dinner on Thursday or Friday? I am dining beside a duchess on Sunday. I want to come very much either of these days. On Sunday I am dining with a duchess. I was away for the week-end at Berkhamsted, and next week-end I am dining with a duchess. I hope you are all well in your sphere of life. What ups and downs we have. For instance, next Sunday I am

"Yours sincerely,

"J.M.B."

One, in other words, of a thousand funny, or absurd, or ridiculous letters which his friends know so well, and he was still never too busy and seldom for long in the wrong mood to write. The letter of a snob? That is the joke, of course. And yet not entirely a joke. It is more than ten years since he swore off the aristocracy, after that secret and painful rebuff, and at this moment he is still preparing to flay a titled flibbertigibbet in *What Every Woman Knows*.

He has been wary all this time. Has had the pleasure, more than once, of rebuffing their social advances himself, or when brought into contact has assumed a decidedly cold and prickly mask. Yet always, though of course he has done his best to pity them as parasites, there has been a good deal of fascination about them, too. And by 1906 if it is a question, as it appears to be, of weighing a long line of ancestors, and a castle, perhaps, and a crowd of cousins who are also in Debrett, against a very particular position as a successful author and playwright, then it is also clear—to both pride and humility—that there is something on each side of the scale. Thus, and certainly not without reason, he assures and reassures himself; and indeed, whatever may have been happening meanwhile to the upper classes, he is a very different character from the author and playwright of ten or twelve years ago.

So the duchess in that letter was Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland; extraordinarily beautiful, quite unnecessarily intelligent and clever, and with a special interest, always, in writers and the stage. A great friend, also, of Anthony Hope—as we keep on calling him, because still hardly anyone spoke of him by his real name—who may easily have provided the link. Almost certainly did, in fact; and it was a link that not only quickly solidified, but led, of course, to others in turn. There was very little aristocratic ice to be broken here—and Barrie will be addressing her as “Millie” within months rather than years—but this is also the beginning of a new attitude and a new phase. Duchesses, he has discovered—with simple and subtle interest—are anything but proof against the spell. It is adjusted slightly—or inevitably, if you like, for which of us is proof against a duchess?—but it seems to be well worth exercising. No, he wasn’t exactly collecting them yet, and perhaps only another kind of snob would say that he ever did. But as he continues to endow them with qualities and sensibilities that they don’t all actually possess, it is positively noted that his circle is becoming higher as well as wider.

One sees him beginning to march up and down in mammoth drawing-rooms, and scowling, perhaps, at an intruder. Or walking endlessly to and fro, under the lee of some half-enchanted and half-anxious châtelaine on the lawns and terraces of a big country house. He likes to hear their troubles, to give them his advice, to flatter them by telling them what he is thinking of writing next. And then, soon enough also, he is taking to leaving his trade-mark.

There is a special and very skilful trick with a penny and a stamp.

You lick the stamp, you place it face downwards on the penny, and then—with an extremely adroit jerk or flick, so that the penny shall fly aloft without turning over—the stamp is suddenly sticking to the ceiling. Barrie was almost infallible at this, and still there must be stamps, which he had employed in this manner, on ceilings all over Great Britain. First on humbler ceilings—where there is probably less chance that they have survived—but then (for, after all, the higher the ceiling, the more skill it took) in the houses of the noble and great. Was this an honour or an impertinence? The noble and great gazed upwards after he had gone, and may sometimes have felt a little doubt. Should they regard it as an interesting relic, and boast of it to other visitors, or was it rather a blot on their ancient home? It was there, anyhow. No shifting it without ladders and staging. And again, at moments, they remembered how little they had done to discourage their irresistible guest at the time. Another queer business. Yet it isn't exactly shyness or diffidence that makes people stick postage-stamps on other people's ceilings. No, you certainly couldn't call it that.

Frohman was over again early this year, and here is another thing that a word from Barrie made him do. Michael Davies—five and a half now—had been ill at Berkhamsted, and couldn't, in consequence, be brought to London to see *Peter Pan*. So Frohman waved his own wand, had dresses and properties packed up, and sent some of the company down to Egerton House to act scenes from the play in Michael's nursery. Does one see a mother hurrying for the thermometer as soon as it was all over? In any case, Michael recovered, and Frohman again felt that he had been allowed to do something which no one else on earth could have obtained from him by any means at all.

And here, in March, is Barrie in another character, though for anything but the first or last time. Impossible now, for the Church of England keeps no such card-index, to turn up the list of this former Free Church communicant's godchildren. To discover, even, who was the first; and there must have been something like dozens before he came to the last. In any case, the fair-haired and exquisitely pretty Miss Pauline Chase was to be baptised now, as one of riper if still comparatively negligible years; and Barrie and Miss Ellen Terry were two of her three sponsors at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. The names "Ellen" and "Matthew" were added to her

own—though Matthew may seem a strange name for a girl, it had once been given to one of Barrie's sisters—and the Press, of course, took note; so that one of the sponsors very nearly hid behind a pillar after all. Not long afterwards *Peter Pan* sets off on its first provincial tour; and is in Liverpool, when Miss Loftus—for whom Miss Chase had twice deputised in a recent emergency—obligingly stands down at a matinée so that the same understudy may have even more of a chance. For Barrie and Frohman are both dashing northwards to-day, and both have got hold of the same idea. If this girl is as good as they hope, she shall have an understudy of her own next Christmas. They can't wait to see her after the performance, for they have to dash back, but their decision, if favourable, will be communicated to her by a cross on a sheet of paper. Not much hesitation. In fact, it was only another game. The symbol is sent round to her in the first interval, and Miss Chase will be Peter at the Duke of York's now at every annual revival, until she marries and leaves the stage. A Peter who will never achieve Miss Boucicault's sexlessness, for he or she is far too pretty, but a Peter who never ceases to transmit the happiness and gaiety which she always feels in the part. "I'm youth, I'm joy, I'm a little bird that has broken out of the egg." That is Miss Pauline Chase's greatest line, for whenever she says it, it is almost the literal truth. She hardly plays anything else, but here—always excepting Miss Boucicault—she is incomparable and irreplaceable. And Barrie is always her special friend now, as she, too, joins the week-end parties and plays golf-croquet at Black Lake.

From the note-book. "The God-Daughter"—self and El Terry complications." There weren't any, of course; but for a playwright there might be, and this was how the playwright saw it. The notion lingers long enough for several more entries about "The God-Child play," but then these also flicker out. Back to "The Thousand Nightingales," which never changes very much, yet never seems to get much further. "Title. 'The Stolen Wood.'" That, surely, is another hint of the ultimate *Dear Brutus*. And under the heading of "Voices" there are also foreshadowings—a whole string of them—of the ghost-mother and her son who will eventually meet in *Mary Rose*. No note on something else that happened this spring; his mother-in-law's sudden illness and death at Hastings, to which Mrs. Barrie was summoned from one of the trips to Paris. But of course the note-books are only a very special and unreliable sort of diary.

The actual work which has come past them or through them is a couple of new one-act plays. The first—*Punch*, with the sub-title of *A Toy Tragedy*—had been in the background for some time; and though originally intended for something more like *Pantaloon*—a dramatisation of the hero's private life—had now been overtaken by an outburst of impudence, and the notion of adding a Super-punch, who was to be made up as G.B.S. The second (in three scenes), dashed off quickly since the Coventry election—"I enjoyed writing it," says a letter, "more than most things lately"—was a kind of political burlesque. Title—*Josephine*. With considerable resemblance to similar scenes in a French *revue*—a word with no other significance in London of 1906—and again containing impudence, personalities, and a general outlook on politics which was as unique as it was obscure. Both plays, it seems obvious now, were products of restlessness and indecision, of too much freedom, and of an attitude to the faithful public that it really hardly deserved. Yet Barrie, at the moment, thought them both brilliant. Realised, in a temporarily calmer condition, that they weren't quite the stuff for the Duke of York's—and certainly not for the New York Empire—and so slung them at Frederick Harrison, still of the Haymarket. Who jumped at the thought of having Barrie again. And then read them, and was compelled to send them back.

The author, outwardly at any rate, quite unshaken. There are friends who remember his extraordinary and unalterable conviction that Harrison was wrong and he was right. And of course there was another manager who hadn't a chance to escape. Frohman; who must have found them even more bewildering than his rival or colleague, but did his duty with the utmost promptitude, and put them into rehearsal at what was now another of his theatres—the Comedy—at once.

With Boucicault directing, and in this case playing both the title-roles as well; for Josephine, of course, was the author's strange, pantomime method of exhibiting and mocking at Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. With Louis Calvert as Mr. Buller—a thin disguise for John Bull—in the same piece, and a cast including practically nothing but present or future stars\*. While in *Punch* Miss Eva Moore played Judy, and A. E. Anson, in a red beard and other

\* The list of other names is interesting to playgoers, but perhaps, in this unfortunate instance, would be better in a foot-note. Messrs. A. E. Matthews, Kenneth Douglas, Graham Browne, Matheson Lang, and Frederick Volpé. Miss Mabel Hackney and Miss Grace Lane.



Shavian insignia, played Superpunch, who was driving the original family from the stage. As a third piece—though actually given first—in this remarkable evening's entertainment there was a one-act play, about the Indian Mutiny, without even one attempted joke in it at all. For contrast? But more was needed to clear the mists from Barrie's two offerings, and to make the audience laugh. "Mr. Barrie," wrote Walkley in the notice which appeared on the following morning, or April 6th, "is our spoilt child;" and having settled this, he went on to treat him with every possible forgiveness and kindness. But even from Walkley there was more sympathy than praise, and another critic, who spoke of a "damp political squib," came much nearer to the general feeling of the house. They tried shifting the Indian Mutiny play to the middle of the programme, but there was no difference at the box-office. Again a triple bill had failed to attract, and in this case had very little that was attractive. Up went the notice on the call-board, and *Punch* and *Josephine* vanished for ever in almost exactly three weeks.

One is glad to recall that Frohman immediately replaced them by Gerald du Maurier in *Raffles*—a collaboration founded on his own stories by Hornung, the Allahakbarrie—which ran continuously for eleven months. He also effected a slight economy by presenting Barrie with a registered telegraphic address—"Panbar, London"—which he had invented himself. And his faith and idolatry were as firm as ever. Furthermore, *Peter Pan*, with Miss Adams, was still running triumphantly at the Empire, and though *Alice* and Miss Barrymore were temporarily dissociated, both plays and stars were already booked for autumn tours. Fifteen weeks for the latter, with a gross of over a hundred thousand dollars. Forty-one weeks for *Peter* and Miss Adams, and more than half a million taken at the doors. It may be that Frohman couldn't foresee these precise figures. It is more than likely that he would never bother to add them up. But even without the faith and idolatry he could have afforded that unlucky experiment at the Comedy. And next year, though Barrie wouldn't even be sending him a curtain-raiser, the figures would be soaring almost out of sight.

So Frohman sat cross-legged at the Savoy, and shrugged his shoulders, and turned cheerfully to all his other plans; one of which was a revival of *Pantaloon* (with Miss Chase and Albert Chevalier, the coster singer and comedian) to precede a vehicle of Miss Marie Tempest's at the Duke of York's. And Barrie despised the public

who hadn't seen his jokes, and was soon dropping in regularly again—when they weren't both down at Black Lake or somewhere up the river—to make his manager laugh. Yet for both of them, also, there was a shadow of anxiety, which had been coming and going for some months now, in connection with the man who had first brought them together. Arthur Addison Bright.

There wasn't an agent to touch him, and to both, though particularly to Barrie, he was a close and old friend. Yet the spark of genius must have had a spark of danger in it. He did too much. He worked too hard. And then, for no reason that could ever be suggested except that temptation had caught him unawares, he had got into an appalling mess with his accounts. Or not a mess, precisely, for he knew exactly what he had done. He was far too clever and business-like just to have bungled things like that. But every box-office return, for half a dozen special clients, had gone first through his hands, and gradually, and then wildly and madly, he had taken to altering and falsifying them before he passed them on. Of course it was bound to be discovered sooner or later, and though at the first suspicion—which naturally wasn't Barrie's—he had still managed to cover his tracks, that couldn't be the end of it. In May, cornered by a more searching investigation, he had admitted everything and the whole business was out.

To the shocked and miserable horror of both Frohman and Barrie, who had believed in him, and had only recently had the relief and satisfaction of hearing that the original charge had been withdrawn. The total misappropriations had come to the astounding figure of twenty-eight thousand pounds, of which more than sixteen thousand had been due to Barrie. Yet there it all was in the bank still. He hadn't spent it. All could be repaid, and Barrie—who saw now how his own vagueness had helped to bait the trap—wanted to forgive and forget at once. But some of the smaller victims felt otherwise. Barrie was rich, they said, and could afford this kind of generosity. But they couldn't. Even if their money were returned, they had still been swindled. They were determined to prosecute.

Frohman, who knew everything, and was absolutely wretched about it, but hadn't been swindled himself, was prepared to take Barrie's side. But it was useless. The law was in motion, and Bright, whose nerves and health were collapsing, knew it. He went out to Switzerland; couldn't sleep, couldn't rest, couldn't face what

was coming. At Lucerne, on the evening of May 29th, the whole thing suddenly came to a dreadful climax for this other victim, and he took his own life. The news reached London, and Barrie, with Bright's younger brother, went out to identify the body and bring it home. But still he mourned and forgave. In a paragraph which he immediately communicated to *The Times*—where no other record of the tragedy appears—he wrote: "For many years he had been my most loved friend."

Yet that this was so near the truth could only add to the bitterness. Money had done this, and the world had done it, and all those memories of the friendship could only make it worse. Bright had escaped, but Barrie, always with that tormenting load on his conscience, must still go on. He didn't particularly want his sixteen thousand back—there was a feeling now that it was blood-money, and accursed—but Bright's widow insisted, and he and the others were all repaid in full. The chapter closed. But the story and its effect on at least one character could never be forgotten. For a while, having been driven to it by painful necessity in the months of crisis, he continued with frantic efforts to keep his own accounts. For a short while, also, Bright's business partner would be handling some of his affairs. Then everything was transferred to that younger brother, who had never been a partner and now set up as an agent on his own. It seemed strange to some, but never to Barrie, who stopped keeping accounts again, and trusted as completely as he had trusted before. And this time, for the remaining thirty-one years of his life, was never let down.

Sixteen thousand pounds, though. It had never even crossed his mind that it was missing. One has to gasp a little—looking back at the guineas trickling into Grenville Street—when one thinks of that.

Early June now. Thoughts always, in other years—and plans, too—for assembling the Allahakbarries. But not this year. Not even for the summer festival at Black Lane. For the tragedy of one friend had only just reached its darkest point, when the even greater tragedy of another began. Arthur Davies was lying in a London nursing-home. He had been troubled with what everyone had taken to be some mild but irritating form of infection on his face. That was all, indeed, that even the doctors had thought at first. But they were wrong. Closer examination had revealed a deep-seated sarcoma; there must be a serious and dangerous operation at once.

And Barrie, of course—with cricket quite out of the question—must be with him now, day after day.

Giving everything to provide such hope and comfort as he could. Thinking of everything. Revealing himself once more with the best of all bedside manners. Devoting himself incessantly and unfailingly to the man whom he had known now for more than eight years. To Sylvia's husband. To the father of his five favourite boys. Six weeks of it, and though of course there were other visitors, there was none who sat there so steadfastly. Then the surgeons announced that they had conquered; that the malignancy had been entirely removed. Yet Arthur Davies was still an invalid, still bandaged, and beneath the bandages still terribly disfigured. He couldn't think of working, and barristers have no partners to carry on while they're away. The position which he had made for himself was of no value unless he could return to his chambers. And he couldn't. And he had a wife and five sons.

Barrie, inevitably, to the rescue. What else, in this hideous world, was his money for? Yet in this hideous world one knows that it can be harder to take than to give, and Arthur Davies must still hold out while he could. There was a sad sort of holiday at Rustington again. Then a week, again with the Barries, at Fortingall, in Perthshire. Then back to Berkhamsted, with hope of a kind under the cloud. Mrs. Barrie away now on a motoring tour in France. But Barrie still in attendance on the Davises; helping with advice—and presently, of course, with more than advice—in a scheme for getting George to Eton, where Hugh Macnaghten, his father's friend, would presently also be doing his part; helping again—this time through Captain Scott—with Jack's nomination for the navy. Something more than an uncle now, but though the young Davises had still six authentic uncles and a grandfather, something even more was needed. For the cloud hadn't really lifted. There were doctors again, and then specialists, at Egerton House. The dreadful disease had returned, after barely three months' imagined mercy. No further operating was possible. Nothing for it now but for Arthur Davies to suffer agony, in his mind as well as his tortured body, and then—when suffering could last no longer—to die.

This was both foreground and background to Barrie's autumn and winter, and then to his early spring. Nothing else mattered or counted, in the world or his own home; and though he still shut himself at times in the garden study, and still pecked at his ideas

and snatches of dialogue, his thoughts seldom stayed there for long. Often he was almost ashamed—though he needed it and couldn't help it—of working like this at all. For he had taken another pledge, and again it was unthinkable that it should be anything less, to share in this tragedy to the utmost; to make it his own tragedy; and then to call on his powers of courage and consolation for all and even more than they could give. There must be mourning at Leinster Corner as well. His friends, if they saw him at all, must only see him in this hushed, and heroic, and terrifying mood. No, he couldn't quite keep away from the rehearsals for the third Christmas season of *Peter Pan* at the Duke of York's, where again he was still adding afterthoughts to the business and text; and in February, when the children in the company got up a private performance of some of the scenes on their own, he took the part of the cabman who helps to carry Mr. Darling's kennel into the nursery. This was the Christmas, also, when Frohman arranged for a complete reproduction, with Miss Zena Dare as Peter, at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester; which also toured afterwards, so that there were two *Peter Pans* in England until the middle of May. And the Christmas when Hodder and Stoughton, and Scribner's, published those slightly-revised chapters from *The Little White Bird* as *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, with the very well-known pictures by Arthur Rackham. And with the dedication: "To Sylvia and Arthur Llewelyn Davies and Their Boys (My boys)."

For Berkhamsted was still the centre of the author's life. At the beginning of February Arthur Davies had so serious a hæmorrhage that the doctors thought it must be the end. But then he rallied, to face more torment. He couldn't speak now; he could only scrawl the faintest little notes. Barrie, repeatedly assuring him that he would stand by his wife and children for ever, had become the one hope and security to which he clung. He knew that the real relations would do all they could, but none was in a position to provide a home for the six survivors at once. The notes showed no pride now. They couldn't. And Barrie swore to do everything that was asked. Or everything that he had himself suggested, for now it was the same thing.

The disease, as if knowing that any advance would end the struggle, entered on a pitiless phase of suspense. All through March the victim's condition remained unaltered. He was terribly ill, and couldn't possibly recover, but still, it seemed, he must neither get

better nor worse. Barrie made a dash for a few days to Scotland, to stay with his brother—this, as was said, was the year of Alick's retirement, when he settled permanently at Strath View—and then came hurrying back. Turned round immediately, and went down to Berkhamsted. No change. No more hæmorrhages. But absolutely no hope.

Early in April, in company with a candidate then known as Prince Edward, Jack Davies sat for his examinations for the navy in London. Passed successfully, and would be going off to Osborne, which was still the first stage, at about the same time that George was due in Macnaghten's house at Eton. Barrie still hovering over every step. Their guardian already, in everything but name. And that, indeed—though he used it himself and liked it to be used—he never actually or legally became. When Arthur Davies died—on April 19th, at the age of forty-four, less than a year from the first sign of illness—it was one of his brothers who found himself officially in this place. And would have done his duty, if Barrie had let him; or if he, too, hadn't known that Barrie's money was far too important and valuable to be refused.

So Barrie, keeping his pledge, and following what seemed to him the only possible course, instantly assumed entire financial responsibility for the widowed mother and all five sons. They were his now, and they should be no one else's. Observers, even though a number of them had expected it, felt awed and a little overwhelmed; for this, one can still say, was a gesture quite outside anything in ordinary life. He was rich, of course—how rich the observers had no idea, but this was the year when earnings, investments, and a large instalment from Addison Bright's executors brought in forty-four thousand pounds; yet still it seemed an amazing, and daring, and perhaps more than daring portent. Not, again, that the observers learnt everything at once, for of course no public announcement was ever made. But those in the inner circle knew well enough that Sylvia and her children were moving from Berkhamsted to a house—only a few hundred yards from their last London house—in Campden Hill Square. They could see with their own eyes, soon enough, that it wasn't the sort of house that she could possibly have taken or kept going without help. And Barrie's casual yet insistently proprietary manner was a clue that nobody—or nobody who stopped to think for more than a moment—could possibly miss.

Even George, not fourteen yet and brought up with this strange little Providence always at least in the offing, was too young to realise with full understanding what the strange little Providence had done. Jack, perhaps, with a touch already of inherited intolerance, had a deep-down notion that it was an interloper who was saving them all from ruin. But for Peter—who now goes back to Wilkinson's in Orme Square—and still more for the two youngest, this was just something that had happened. Their father was dead. They were moving to London. And Mr. Barrie was still nearly always there. Not yet could they guess what they had gained or lost. For even Peter was only just ten.

Two other figures of whose thoughts we are bound to think. The wife at Leinster Corner, who had loved this family, too, who had known them so long and so intimately. Who had sat alone so often while Arthur Davies was dying and now—increasingly, even if no one else took the trouble to point it out—must feel how in everything but physical faithlessness she was losing what she could no longer keep. And beautiful, unhappy, shattered Sylvia—what can she have thought? It's shockingly easy now to say that she should have accepted nothing, that she should have accepted less, or that in some superhuman manner she should have rewarded all that incalculable kindness with a cold shoulder or a clean break. But no one who knew her, or Barrie either, could possibly have expected anything of the sort. When Barrie had decided to give, he gave, and no one—unless they were literally superhuman—could hope to escape the gift. She knew that, if anyone did, by this time. She knew how utterly he depended on her, and how utterly in another sense, she and her children depended on him. Her life wasn't over, theirs was only beginning, she had had a year which might have shaken principles of solid steel, and she was still a du Maurier, with an urgent and invincible distaste for everything sordid and mean. He had made no terms with her. She was still sorry for him, for being so strange and queer; and still sorry, if it comes to that, for his wife. But if this were temptation, there was no chance of evading it. At first she was too tired and miserable. Then, as a mother, she mustn't and couldn't sacrifice her children's future. And then—not yet, but nothing could stop this coming—she had earned this shadow of security by what she had been through, and was going to keep it, and no one was going to take it away.

Forty-four thousand a year. Not every year, of course, though

it would be up to this, and higher, in more than one year lying ahead. She may not have known it, either; but it was at the bottom of everything, for all that. The money that kept pouring in. The cheques that were still, as often as not, stuffed into a drawer—to stay there for weeks or months—while the payee still told anyone or everyone how little he knew what to do with them. Do we look on as moralists and think of texts about Mammon? It doesn't matter what we do. The luck that brought the golden shower could bring no other luck now as well. Everyone, the lonely wife included, could have anything that they wanted, if only money could buy it. But only, it seemed, on cruel and fatal terms, and no one could have what their hearts really desired. They all wanted to go back. They all wanted what must now look like the innocence and happy simplicity of ten years ago. Kensington Park Gardens; Gloucester Road; or for Barrie, of course, something far further back still. Here is the first entry from the latest notebook, scribbled in January of this year. "*The Lovely Moment. Finest Dream in the World.* That it is early morning & I am out on a highland road—dew, &c.—it is time before I knew anything of sorrow pain or death. Everyone I have loved is still alive—it is the morning of life—of the world."

Then it goes on—again, of course—to toy with how this can be used for a play. But money can't make the dream come true. Money can only make it lovelier and more unattainable. And money—another forty-four thousand pounds of it by December—is working ceaselessly to bring more misery in its train.

Here's Frohman again; the one man, if any, who knew what money was worth. Risk it, spend it, hurl it into every kind of theatrical adventure, and never mind if it doesn't come back. Show it how little you care for it, lavish it on more and more productions, and—for a while at any rate—it will still be your obedient slave. But even Frohman can't teach this lesson to those who aren't managers or to those whom he so prodigally pays. There is still no new play for him, by the author of *Peter Pan*, that can be more than distantly discussed, and he plans another scheme while he waits. A revival—at the Duke of York's, of course, and as soon as it can be fitted in—of *The Admirable Crichton*. So Barrie instantly begins revising the text—at no revival in his lifetime will it ever be quite the same—and when the scheme is presently postponed to the following spring, has time to revise it again. As for Number 23, Campden



Hill Square, there are few secrets from Frohman, who is, of course, both fascinated and impressed. He sees the kindness and nothing else, though he realises, for he has met them all by this time, that only Barrie could have found and taken possession of a family with such charm. No afterthoughts or criticisms from Frohman; for still whatever Barrie does is right, and still he always wishes that he could do it himself.

Week-ends and weeks at Black Lake again, and work now—the anodyne but also the inescapable habit—in both studies. At least three separate ideas—the almost constant first act of the Scotch family's marriage-trap, the titled temptress, and the play about an election—are still all slowly coming together as *What Every Woman Knows*. Though still, alas, the author is far from clear in his own mind as to what this knowledge is. It has varied for years, and will go on varying up to the last minute. But still it's a good title, and still, roughly speaking, what women know is that they're far cleverer than men.

"Drink play." That will be written, though not for quite a while yet, as the one-act play, *Old Friends*. But it was meant to be a three-acter at first, and so was *Half an Hour*, and so was *The Will*, both of which have acquired complete outlines, if not scenarios, by this summer. Here also is "The Second Chance" again—the ultimate *Dear Brutus*—with its ultimate three acts distinctly formed. More plays, still mostly variants of what we have met before. "Princess Pocohontas" —for Pauline," is a new notion, but stops at that. A casting back to the ghost of Primus, the *St. James's* schoolboy. Jack Davies's letters from Osborne might be used—but never were—for Secundus, a naval cadet.

All this in the two studies; but outside them there was the beginning of a new orientation towards the stage. The playwright who owed so little to other playwrights, and so few of whose closer literary friends as yet wrote plays at all, had almost slipped into a position of authority. He certainly hadn't sought it. For at his desk he had been entirely concerned with satisfying himself, while in the stalls, or wherever he sat watching other people's work, he had been either his own kind of onlooker or Frohman's special critic, adviser, and friend. Yet there was the position—inseparable, of course, from outstanding professional success. There were others, besides Frohman, in the theatre with beliefs and enthusiasms of their own. And particularly, for the last three years, there had been

a management at the Court Theatre, in Sloane Square, which very much stood for the Edwardian theatrical renaissance.

Its joint directors, J. E. Vedrenne, who attended more to the business side, and H. Granville Barker (as he was then billed), who acted and produced, were no megalomaniacs in the Frohman sense, and could\* never afford to take a twentieth part of his risks. Yet they hung on there, with immense determination, intelligence, and ambition; running a kind of repertory in which their biggest name was Bernard Shaw, but in which Galsworthy, Maeterlinck, Euripides (*via* Gilbert Murray), St. John Hankin, Elizabeth Robins, Laurence Housman, and other still comparatively uncommercial authors met with encouragement and occasional success. This year they would be moving—and in the end its higher overhead would beat them—to the Savoy; but before they moved, a little play of Hewlett's was put into the programme; Barrie crept quietly in to the rehearsals, was discovered, but discovered also, in his own case, that he was being treated with considerable respect. He liked that. He liked this little theatre, with the Underground rumbling beneath it, where sometimes it seemed that there were almost more rehearsals than performances. He liked Barker, who looked up to him, yet was obviously so outrageously clever himself. Now he was meeting Galsworthy, whom of course he liked. And G. B. S., not for the first time, but on new terms and in a new kind of way.

Secretly, these two might never fully appreciate each other's gifts, and neither, perhaps, was unduly anxious to laugh at the other's wit—Barrie most certainly not; but there was appreciation for all that. They were much the same age—Shaw, actually, was four years older—they had both come to London, the one from Ireland and the other from Scotland, with nothing but their brains; they had both been struggling and then successful journalists; and now they were both infatuated with the stage. It wasn't exactly a mirror that they saw at these meetings—for Shaw was still anything but a box-office pet, and Barrie would never be even an intellectual socialist—but as two men on two such similar ladders there was always something that they shared. And now Barrie, also, had found his way to Sloane Square. His own work, of course, could never be seen there, for the unwritten agreement must bind him always to the Duke of York's. But his thoughts were deeply and thoroughly concerned with it now, and a special thought that he had power here also was a constant pleasure and pride. Who else was as familiar with Charles

Frohman as with Barker and all his plans? Nobody. So the theatre, it seemed, had no boundaries for a man in his position. He might very easily have noticed it before. But it was the Court Theatre, as much as anything, which brought this home to him, widened his corporate outlook, and drew him for a while into theatrical politics too.

Of course in a world where there is even more make-believe than in the House of Commons, and where too such unsteady influences as art and gambling are always jointly or separately at work, movements are apt to be both spasmodic and confused. In Court circles, however, there were at least a couple of recognisable planks in the platform, as well as a pretty distinguishable attitude of mind. This attitude was that the box-office should as far as possible be the servant of the stage, and not the other way round. The first plank was a confirmed and almost mystical belief in the National Theatre. While the second—which at the moment was also more a matter of theory than of definite action—was the need for reforming the censorship. A long story, and so far, as one can imagine, of very little personal interest to Barrie; or to Frohman, or to anyone at the respectable and conventional Duke of York's. But there were rebels elsewhere, and intellectuals who very much resented the same standards being applied to serious drama—*Ghosts*, for example—and the frothiest French farce. At the beginning of this year William Archer had publicly and logically proposed that the office of Censor of Plays should be abolished. The plank hadn't hardened yet, though everyone in Sloane Square agreed with him; but meanwhile Granville Barker was writing a play called *Waste*. Its hero was a brilliant politician, forced into retirement by the scandal of a divorce. Any treatment less demoralising or pornographic can seldom have been employed. But he knew, and the Court knew, and Barrie knew, that it might easily prove a test case. They waited with considerable interest; a little, perhaps, like boys outside a headmaster's study, yet also in the spirit of martyrs and pioneers. A stimulating feeling of crisis was approaching. Solidarity among playwrights was again very much in the air.

No crisis, yet, though, and very little interest, it must be admitted, on the part of the general public. The first, and even the second, would arise in due time. But Barrie, this summer, had his own work and preoccupation as well. There was a plan to visit Captain Scott on H.M.S. *Albemarle*, now stationed on the west coast of Ireland,

to which he was looking forward with all the old feeling of adventure and romance. But at the last moment it was abandoned, because another plan—to take a house in Scotland for August—had met with a hitch, and a substitute must be found and inspected. So instead of his week with the navy, he concentrated on house-hunting in the Highlands. Discovered what he wanted—in Dhivach Lodge, near Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire—and took it for about two months from the 23rd of July. As a home not only for himself, Mrs. Barrie, and Luath, but for Sylvia Davies and the boys as well. His niece, Madge Murray—the one now on the stage—was also with them, and there were visits from others, including Captain Scott.

It was a very wet holiday, and once, when the burn rose suddenly, the hugh Luath was swept into it and nearly drowned. Saved, with great presence of mind, by Sylvia, who rushed along the bank and grabbed him as he whirled past; which was an enormous relief, if rather a disgrace for a Newfoundland. But there was fishing, and there were games, and of course there were stories. Michael, seven now, was at the best age for listening, and the saga took note of this by introducing a character called Michael Pan, of whom little else is known or remembered, except that he was Peter's brother. And Madge Murray, even though she was an actress, could talk endlessly to George about cricket. Yet Arthur Davies's death was so recent that still there must be the shadow of mourning. Kindness and hospitality from the host, whose main plan it had been that the boys should enjoy themselves, but moments of infectious blackness and gloom as well.

Moments of work, too. "Idea for using first act of *Wedding Guest* for another play for U.S.A." *The Thousand Nightingales* still cropping up. "North Pole (or South). Play." That's Captain Scott, of course. The North Pole was to throw you off the scent, but the South Pole naturally crept in at the next moment, for Scott was already thinking and talking of how he could return to the Antarctic. Barrie listening and encouraging, and even dreaming—as once he had dreamt of Africa and Thomson—of going there too. Nothing to touch exploring, for him, whatever the goal.

Then it was September, and the boys must go back to school. The Fiat, which seems to have overlapped the second Lanchester by now, would take Mrs. Barrie south, with pauses and visits on the way. Barrie at Leinster Corner again, or dropping in at Campden Hill

Square. Still struggling to turn three plays into one for *What Every Woman Knows*, but sometimes planning bits of a book as well. The book which—though not for another four years—would be published as *Peter and Wendy*. A task to be taken up at odd moments, rather than carried through under any kind of pressure. Yet why, one may perhaps wonder, did he tackle it at all? Certainly not to make money. Possibly to please Hodder and Stoughton, or Charles Scribner, who were always hoping for word of a new manuscript, but had had none since 1902. Perhaps for the interest of keeping his novelist's hand in. Or perhaps with a wish to fix the story—which was already being re-told by others—in an official and tangible form. If so, this wouldn't stop him wandering more than once from the stage version, before he reached the end. Now, however, he was still at the beginning; and in October another game thrust everything else aside.

For in this month G. A. Redford, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays—but more generally described as the Censor—refused to issue a licence for *Waste*. There was a violent professional reaction, and an immense rolling up of distinguished professional sleeves. Here, it was felt, was the fight for freedom, and a chance to strike the shackles from the stage. Barker's supporters, headed for the moment by Galsworthy and Gilbert Murray, began organising a campaign for the entire abolition of the present system; and persuaded Barrie to join them. A provisional committee was formed—with a secretary in the shape of a young author and playwright called Gilbert Cannan, recently from Cambridge and now reading for the Bar—and W. S. Gilbert and Pinero hovered on the edge of it, with powerful though still slightly qualified support. There were meetings, at Leinster Corner and elsewhere, and Galsworthy drafted a letter to *The Times*, which seventy-one dramatists—ranging from Meredith and Swinburne to the secretary—signed. Then Barrie called on the Prime Minister—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—who agreed to receive a deputation. C.-B., however, wasn't only dealing with other and, as it may well have seemed to him, much more important responsibilities, but was already a very sick man. So there would be delays here, and finally it would be Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary, who would actually receive it. That won't be until February of 1908, and nothing whatever will result. But as Barrie will still be closely concerned—though sometimes with signs of reluctance, and then again with more

revolutionary enthusiasm than anyone—the story of the great fight over the Censorship may as well run ahead of the rest.

This was what happened, then, so far as the public was concerned. A private Parliamentary Bill was drafted, and sponsors were found. Then it was altered, chopped, changed, and knocked about, as various fresh problems arose. Then, at the end of 1908, it was actually introduced into the House of Commons, where being not only a private but a distinctly controversial Bill, it more or less stuck. In the following spring there was another outburst, when Redford refused a licence for *The Showing-Up of Blanco Posnet*, and it was after this that Asquith, who was now Prime Minister, referred the whole matter to a Committee of both Houses. Which sat, took evidence, and issued a Report. After which, as happens in England, the law remained exactly as it had been before, but its interpretation gradually changed; until to-day even *Ghosts* has been licensed, though the Lord Chamberlain still has an Examiner of Plays.

That, very briefly, is the story, and Barrie is one who must always be part of it. In his own story it brought him into closer contact with his brother-playwrights, it started or strengthened several friendships, and, once more as chance or destiny would have it, it led or at least undoubtedly contributed to the end of his marriage. But this neither he nor anyone else suspected or dreamt in the autumn of 1907. He was behind the scenes in a theatrical-political movement, he liked this, and he liked—when it didn't suddenly bore him—the notion of turning his ingenuity to the conduct of public affairs. But otherwise he was still writing, walking, thinking, and seeing rather more again of new and old friends. He had three houses, in a sense, instead of two now, and flitted between them all. Mrs. Barrie, he may have noticed, was also making far more friends of her own, was sitting alone less often, and had given up enamelling. Indeed, there was only the one way now in which she need ever be lonely. It had drifted to this, and if he thought of it, it seemed, on the whole, a quite natural stage to have reached. He didn't always want to meet these friends, and again it seemed natural that when he didn't he should just slip out. Dinner-parties with no host now sometimes. Yet it was still generally felt that as J. M. Barrie he must be allowed to please himself.

*Peter Pan* again, and the annual rehearsals. Still with Miss Chase and Miss Trevelyan; but no Gerald du Maurier—for though Frohman had released him from *Raffles* last year, he was too big a

star now to be spared from another success. So his doubled part was divided between A. E. Matthews as Mr. Darling, and Robb Harwood as the next-best of all Hooks. Other slight changes in cast and script, but no slackening from Boucicault or the crowds round the box-office. Twice daily for six weeks, three more weeks with an extra matinée daily, and eleven weeks of the now customary spring tour. On February 12th there was another and very special annual event; the birthday dinner at Box Hill. Meredith was eighty this year, and more and more of an invalid, but his mind was as quick and impatient as ever, and both Barries must of course be there. Barrie—who had organised a congratulatory address from thirty distinguished signatories—still offering the most valued of all incense; still knowing just how to draw him out; still telling him stories and projected plots. Looking back. Hesitating to look forward; for herocs at eighty, however heroic, can be no younger this time next year. Yet knowing that he has helped and stood by this one, and always will.

And then some very secret rehearsals. That extra, last scene to *Peter Pan* was only played once—at the end of this fourth season at the Duke of York's—but Boucicault produced it with all his usual care. What other author could have added an epilogue as if the theatre were his own, or have relied on the audience to stay there and keep on applauding until scenery and dresses had been changed? But this was no ordinary theatre, and a last night of *Peter Pan* in those days was never an ordinary occasion. The addicts and enthusiasts had taken their tickets weeks ahead, and their applause could be relied on for at least a quarter of an hour. So presently the Baby Mermaid, now dressed in a nightgown, came before the curtain and announced the additional treat. And then it seemed that twenty years had elapsed, as the nursery was again revealed, as Wendy reappeared as a real mother, and the child who had been the mer-baby was her little daughter Jane. Then, to the familiar music, Peter returned; and as the rest of the story is all in that final chapter of *Peter and Wendy*, there is no need to go further into it now or here. When the curtain fell, there was another full quarter-of-an-hour's applause. And then something decidedly historical occurred. Mr. J. M. Barrie actually showed himself on the stage. In his black overcoat, his scarf, and holding his bowler hat in his hand. He said nothing, the vision was distinctly brief, and he could still stick to it afterwards that never, since *Richard*

*Savage*, had he taken a first-night author's call. But he had appeared for all that. And there was enough affection in that crowded auditorium for all the welcomes that he had missed.

That was on February 22nd, after which the company set off for Glasgow, and the stage was prepared for *The Admirable Crichton*; which, with Lyn Harding and Miss Miriam Clements in place of Harry Irving and Miss Vanbrugh, ran for fifteen weeks. But *Peter* and its author would be meeting again long before Christmas, for this was the first of the two summers when Frohman presented it at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris. In June, for a fortnight, without a hope of clearing his expenses, but because he wanted to be in Paris with Barrie, and to have the play there too. So all this took place, and a twelve-page booklet was prepared—*L'Histoire de Peter Pan, ou le petit garçon qui ne voulait pas grandir*—so that French spectators might have some remote idea of what they had come to see. And with them, and English visitors, the theatre was far from empty, while Frohman and the Barries had fun together; part of which was a *Peter Pan* cricket match, with teams drawn from the company. Then back to London and Black Lake.

It was at the latter, where she was staying at the time, that another friend of both Barries, Miss Kathleen Bruce, suddenly and startlingly announced that she was engaged to Captain Scott. Suddenly, because she couldn't resist it when she heard the party discussing the likelihood or possibility of his never getting married at all. Startlingly, because it was one of those cases where the obvious was invisible to everyone until scales were removed from their eyes. Yet at the same moment everyone was delighted, and on the very best of grounds. No hero, as the world knows now, would have a more heroic wife.

July. Barrie up to Edinburgh, for the unveiling of a memorial to Mrs. Oliphant in St. Giles's, and to make another speech. "When there is such a function as this," it began, "how you must all miss the presence of Professor Masson." He had died in the previous October; but Barrie was forty-eight now, and the scythe can never be far from old friends after that. And so back, once more, to Black Lake.

No house in Scotland this year, or other joint holiday home. Sylvia Davies and the boys were down in the New Forest, and Barrie—quite early in August—was breathing the stuffy, size-laden



atmosphere of the Duke of York's. *What Every Woman Knows* was still being altered, and still being given the touches which would in the end so nearly hide the manner of its growth; but Frohman's plans were made now, and Boucicault, still supported by his henchmen and Miss Lillies, was hard at work.

John Shand . . .	Mr. Gerald du Maurier
Alick Wylie . . .	Mr. Henry Vibart
David Wylie . . .	Mr. Sydney Valentine
James Wylie . . .	Mr. Edmund Gwenn
Maggie Wylie . . .	Miss Hilda Trevelyan
Mr. Venables . . .	Mr. Norman Forbes
Comtesse de la Brière .	Mrs. Tree
Lady Sybil Lazenby .	Miss Lillah McCarthy
Maid . . . . .	Miss Madge Murray

A strong temptation to add nine footnotes must be resisted, but even without them there is Barrie history—past, present, and future—in every one of those names. There were also a hundred supers, who came dashing into the theatre for the election crowd at the end of the second act. The settings were again prodigiously elaborate, filling the stage, and containing detail—to please Barrie and Boucicault—that was often almost out of sight. The fourth act was again copied from Black Lake Cottage, showing the drawing-room and a view beyond it of the garden. The management, in fact, though again personally in America, was once more exuding a spirit of anything but economy. If there had been room for a thousand supers, they would all have been engaged. Barrie was back at the Duke of York's, with his first new full-length play for over three years. The management, at any rate, could detect no flaws in it, and it must be given everything that it could possibly hold.

It could take it. The slow growth, the different ingredients, and the long process of polishing and adjustment, had provided a roundness and richness. Perhaps it was a three-dimensional novel rather than a play, but there was no question that it was a crowded and vivid entertainment, nor that as well as being crammed with everything else, it was crammed full of Barrie. There were no mothers in it, and there were no children; but there were gulps and laughs, mockery and kindness, the fully-developed idiosyncrasy, and in the glorification of its simple heroine, and her final triumph, there was

flattery but there was also truth. The philosophy, if you can call it that, was limited and personal, but there was hardly a moment when the quality flagged. And then there was Boucicault, dovetailing his own ingenuity with the gifts of this outstandingly talented cast, until an audience could do nothing but purr. The Duke of York's at the very top of its all-round form this time, and on Thursday, September 3rd—which was the day, by the way, after Captain Scott's wedding—there was another instant and unqualified success. The Press unanimous, the public enchanted and enthusiastic. Special and deserved triumphs for Gerald and Miss Trevelyan—with a cable from Frohman for the latter, immediately raising her salary—and the absolute assurance of another long run. There were, in fact, three hundred and eighty-four performances—not all at the Duke of York's, for it was moved to the Hicks Theatre (now the Globe) while *Peter Pan* took its place for seven and a half weeks at Christmas—and it was only withdrawn in the following July. For more than ten months, in other words, the London omnibuses were trundling to and fro, bearing the legend *What Every Woman Knows*.

It was also, quite obviously, exactly the vehicle for Miss Adams, who had been Scotch already in *The Little Minister*, and could again have what was distinctly the most important part. So in October she opened in it at Atlantic City, toured with it for another nine weeks to crowded houses, reached the Empire towards the end of December, and stayed there until the beginning of June. The double event had almost been taken for granted this time, but it was solid and genuine for all that. Frohman was making money. His stars and other players were making money. And Barrie, from the first English and American seasons, made more than eighteen thousand pounds.

In the second half of September he was up with the Eshers, at Callander, in Scotland; fished, talked, enjoyed himself, and passed on for a night or two with his brother at Kirriemuir. It looks as if he had heard something at some time on this visit that was thought worth another note. "Highland saying. 'The sea likes to be visited.'" That will go down into the sub-conscious, and come up again. So back to Leinster Corner, and to the meetings and discussions about the Censorship; but not much work on his own account, for there was no new idea yet to which all the curious equipment could be turned. He had earned a rest, though he would

have welcomed another unmistakable impulse, and still spent hours in the study waiting for it to come. Hours at Campden Hill Square, too, giving and taking all that he could. In November there were more little house-parties at the Cottage, but he didn't join them. Excused himself and stayed on in London. It was noticed, naturally, but no one was particularly surprised. They were getting used to his disappearances now. Still he must be allowed to do as he liked. But still it was all moving in the same way.

*Peter Pan* again; but with a new Wendy rehearsing—and a very good one, in Miss Gertrude Lang—for the other Wendy was still being Scotch in *What Every Woman Knows*. This was the year when the special drop-curtain, representing an enormous sampler, was painted and first seen. The alphabet at the top, and then among other decorations and legends, the tributes to "Dear Hans Christian Andersen, Dear Charles Lamb, Dear Robert Louis Stevenson, Dear Lewis Carroll." A frieze, nearer the bottom, of children carrying pirates' heads on poles. The whole from a design by the author—who was blamed by some for his bloodthirstiness, but never, so far as known, by any child—and delightedly paid for by Frohman. They used it for years there, and the first glimpse of it—as the safety-curtain began rising, the footlights were switched on, and the orchestra struck up—is another memory of the Duke of York's. But presently it wore out, or didn't fit some other theatre when the play had to move, and by that time there was no Frohman, and presently no Boucicault, to insist on its being replaced.

The fifth year; and Barrie still at most of the rehearsals, and still inviting favoured children and friends. As much money would be taken as ever, at the box-office which was now always disguised, for this festival, as Wendy's little house. And the Barries were there again on the first night—two days before Christmas—to hear the reception which had now become a rite. There was a special body of infatuated zealots who regularly booked the first rows of the upper circle—months in advance—wore badges, and hurled miniature thimbles and bunches of violets at everyone who came on the stage. Perhaps they were a little foolish, or even a slight nuisance; but they were young, this was how the occasion affected them, and though they have vanished now, they were at least a line in theatrical history, too. Tree, who had produced a fairy play himself this Christmas, may or may not have heard of them, and may or may not have remembered his warning to Frohman. But no

other theatre can ever have held quite so many spectators who already knew a contemporary and unpublished play by heart.

Shricks and yells for the author, but he's behind his own little curtain now and doesn't come out. Mrs. Barrie smiles, and looks pretty but startled—for the noise is deafening—and then somehow they have both slipped away. She won't be here next Christmas. This has been almost the last of her nights in Box F. But that is hidden, and the immediate plan has no theatres in it anyhow. On Boxing-Day she and Barrie, and Sylvia Davies, and the boys, and Gilbert Cannan—the clever young secretary to the unofficial Censorship Committee—all set off for Switzerland. For three weeks or so—the rest of the school holidays—at the Grand Hôtel at Caux, which overlooks the Lake of Geneva from above Montreux. The luxury and elaboration of winter sports were still some way from reaching their subsequent heights, nor was this one of the most fashionable resorts. But it seemed fairly exciting and pretty good fun to the boys, and Barrie did some lugeing and enjoyed playing host. A rather odd party in a way, though. Almost three generations, in a sense. The Barries and Sylvia all in their forties, the boys ranging from fifteen to five, and Cannan only twenty-four. One sees who Sylvia's chief companion would be, and who would be left over among the grown-ups. Yet Cannan not only had an intense admiration for the host's genius and attainments, but was extremely popular with the boys. He told stories, too, and perhaps—for he was brilliant and keen enough—he would follow in other footsteps as well. Tall, thin, fair, and sensitive-looking. A fully-fledged barrister now, but the law wasn't his ambition. He was to be one of the novelists and playwrights of the new era, and indeed for the next few years there was plenty of encouragement and recognition. It was just, in the end, perhaps, another bit of destiny that he couldn't stay the course.

Destiny was at work in other ways, though still hidden from those who were too innocent, and in one case too unobservant or pre-occupied, to read its almost conspicuous signs. If Sylvia saw, then either it wasn't her business or else she also saw—one has to admit this—how the situation was playing into her hands. Temptation here, as well as elsewhere. The money again. The feeling, stronger rather than weaker, that life still owed her something for all that she had lost. Pity her; for the tangle is growing worse and worse, and life hasn't finished with its cruelty to her yet. Pity all this gay extravagance at the Grand Hôtel at Caux. There is something dread-

fully ominous about. Something, behind the laughter, as cold and relentless as the Alps.

All over now. All back to London. And Barrie at rehearsals again. At Wyndham's, the birthplace of *Little Mary*, where Gerald du Maurier is now directing a very mysterious affair. Barrie of course is in the secret; but all that the public knows, or will know for some time, is that Frank Curzon is presenting a play called *An Englishman's Home*, by an author who styles himself "A Patriot." An omen here, too, that in January, 1909, after eight years under a Peacemaker, a professional soldier should be warning his country of war and invasion. For it was Gerald's elder brother, Major Guy du Maurier, who had thus concealed his identity, and when the play opened, on January 27th, no critic cared to laugh its message out of court. They couldn't call it a good play, and it wasn't; it was the crudest possible piece of propaganda, entirely without subtlety or characterisation, and gaining its effects by shock tactics on an audience's nerves. But it was enormously talked about, as it angered some and delighted others, and continued to run until the middle of June; which at least showed that the public could put up with considerable dramatic artlessness, as long as they had their thrill. It has been mentioned for two obvious reasons; first, that a couple of du Mauriers were very closely concerned with it, and secondly that Barrie was in their confidence from the beginning—which was always such fun, in this or any other kind of stage secret, that its implied criticism of the Liberals had no effect on him at all. But there was also a third reason. He was there, in a box, on the opening night, and the rumour immediately started that it was he who was the Patriot. He didn't deny it. He went on playing the game. But he didn't admire the public intelligence; and it was a considerable relief to him when, as was bound to happen sooner or later, the cat escaped from the bag.

Meanwhile, he was still at rehearsals, and still, in more than one sense, behind the scenes. Re-enter John Galsworthy, whose *Silver Box* had added so enormously to the Vedrenne-Barker prestige, whose *Joy* had failed so disastrously when the same management moved to the Savoy, and whose position in the theatres was still so interesting but uncertain that even the infallible *Whitaker's Almanack* had praised and cautioned him as Mr. Goldsworthy in its last-year's annual review. It is quite impossible to do him justice in someone else's biography, or to convey his special qualities in a few, bare lines.

The full, fascinating, and impressive story can only be read elsewhere. Here, however, is Barrie's swift summary, in an extract from a letter written in March, 1909.

"You want to know what Galsworthy is like? A queer fish like the rest of us. So sincerely weighed down by the out-of-jointedness of things socially that internally he is [an illegible but imaginable word here], but outwardly a man-about-town, so neat, so correct—he would go to the stake for his opinions but he would go courteously raising his hat. The other day he was flung out of a hansom, and went as gracefully as if he were leaving his card. That is him to-day, but he has been all its opposites. I think he was once a cowboy, I have hopes he has been a pirate. He has been everywhere and done most things and what turned him from one man into the other I don't know. He used to care for nothing but frivolity; shooting big game, and now so serious and could not put a pin in a butterfly. . . . G . . . is in every way one of the most attractive men. I am very fond of him."

It was this fondness and admiration that had led to the new rehearsals. Galsworthy had written *Strife*, but the Vedrenne-Barker management had got into financial difficulties, and there seemed no other home for it in the commercial theatre of the day. Barrie, however, had a magic wand. He waved it, and Frohman—who wouldn't have dreamt of accepting a play of this type in the ordinary way—instantly arranged for six special matinées, with Barker producing, and all his own resources, at the Duke of York's. To his surprise, there was a pæan from the Press. He cancelled the last two matinées and moved the whole production to the Haymarket. Had to clear out, owing to Harrison's other arrangements, at the end of a week, and took it on to the Adelphi. Alas, the intelligent public wasn't large enough to support what the rest suspected as a sociological treatise, and at the end of another week *Strife*—for the time being—petered out. Frohman didn't mind. He had dropped a good deal of money, but he had pleased Barrie, and Barrie's friends. He had also tasted the dangerous pleasures of being praised as a pioneer.

But Barrie had tasted something, too. He had become the link between all the brains and cleverness of a new movement in the theatre and the manager who might give it a real and solid chance. The word Repertory was in the air, and very much in his mind. The seasons at the Court took on a fresh glamour, and the failure at the Savoy might still, with his aid, be no more than a trifling set-

back on the road to something like an authentic National Theatre at last. Frohman listened to him, and was completely carried away. He would change or modify all his plans. Only the Duke of York's was good enough for the scheme, and they must wait—because Gerald was to star there first—until the following spring. But then the new repertory season should have all his support and backing, and with the promise of plays from Barrie, Shaw, Galsworthy, and Barker to start with, there was at least no likelihood that the venture would pass unobserved. To three of these names he still personally attached very little importance, and it shows how powerful the spell was—and the disinterested enthusiasm behind it—that a play by Barrie should be deliberately withheld from the chance of a continuous run. But Frohman never dealt in half-measures, and the plan was going ahead. A great gust of hope and excitement blew through the world of the theatrical renaissance. For now that Barrie had got round Frohman, Repertory would have its real chance at last.

A further sign—turning back a little, to the middle of March—of the way in which the now harried yet elusive Mr. Redford was reacting on stage history and closing the professional ranks. A lunch at the Criterion Restaurant for a dozen distinguished playwrights, and immediately afterwards they form themselves, for a new and special purpose, into one. In other words, it was on March 17th, 1909, that the Dramatists' Club was founded, with Pinero as its first President, and Barrie as an original member. Presently it would increase to a floating total of about forty, and its monthly luncheons would remain a monthly bond. But there had been no such regular gatherings before the fight with the Lord Chamberlain, and dramatists should still be grateful to his Department for bringing them together like this.

On April 2nd—all but twenty-seven years since the rakish photograph in gown and mortar-board—Barrie returned to his old university for the bestowal of his second honorary LL.D. A special address was delivered, and again both graduates and students cheered. More than one glance into the past, but for the future—though, in fact, it was five years nearer—there was still no vision of the present Chancellor's successor. No one, not even Barrie himself, can have seen as far as that.

Now he turns south, and goes down for Easter to Black Lake, where again there is a little party of Mason and other friends. This glimpse, which a guest remembers, can no longer be dated, but

there are grounds for putting it not so far away. She—for this was Wendy, or Maggie Wylie, or Miss Trevelyan—was looking out of her bedroom window, early one morning, when a strange sight appeared. J.M.B. came strolling slowly and thoughtfully into view. Behind him, at the same pace, erect, and with his front paws thrust through his master's arms, came the great dog Luath. Barrie seemed quite unconscious of the weight that he was supporting, or even that he was attended at all. The vision passed, and vanished. The guest withdrew from the window, and now only this queer and characteristic memory remains. Barrie and Luath taking the air together, in complete mutual understanding. Yet if it were this Easter or summer, and though Luath lived another five or six years, their walks were nearing an end. And so, for one of them, was Black Lake Cottage; for there were omens here, too.

Back, as the party dispersed, to Leinster Corner, where there was still much talk of the censorship and of repertory plans. Barker and Galsworthy were both working on their plays, and no one doubted that G.B.S. would be ready with at least one, if not more. But Barrie was still hesitating between cloudy ideas. He couldn't hurry himself, and he couldn't settle down to anything but fragmentary scenes. There was a restlessness, which Frohman tried to soothe, while still inextricably pledged to the general project. For of course, whether Barrie were ready or not, the scheme had got to go on. Sometimes, however, it must be admitted, when talks at the Savoy Hotel drifted to other matters, both parties would find that they were having rather more fun.

For the Birthday Honours List this summer, which was now in preparation, Asquith was proposing to pay special attention to the Stage. Tree, Pinero, and Barrie were all offered knighthoods, which two of them accepted, and rose in due course as Sir Herbert and Sir Arthur. But the third excused himself. He didn't feel like it. He would rather, he told those who were in the secret, go on being plain Mr. Barrie. He was urged again, but he was quite firm. Four years later, as is no secret, there was a still higher offer, and he accepted it at once. A little inconsistent? But of course. He didn't want to be a knight in 1909, but he wanted to be a baronet in 1913. It was as simple, in a way—for all the smoke-clouds that he cast over both decisions—as that. And for once there wasn't only a second chance, but a better one than the first.



May, 1909. May 18th, and another sweep of the scythe. Death of George Meredith, after only two days of acute or additional illness, at Flint Cottage on Box Hill; his home and shrine for more than forty years. Barrie went down there at once, and stood by, mourning and helping, in the unmistakable character of the hero's closest surviving friend. It was he, also, who joined in organising the request—which is said to have had royal support—that the hero's ashes should be laid in Poets' Corner. The Dean, however, had strange but dogged doubts, and refused. So Meredith was buried, by the side of his second wife, in Dorking Cemetery, and the world of literature must gather to honour him there. Barrie amongst them; and three days later the well-known tribute—presently to be republished by Constable's, and again, long afterwards, in *The Greenwood Hat*—appeared on the green pages of the *Westminster Gazette*. Neither *Dorking* nor *the Abbey* was its heading, and the skill that went into it has seldom been equalled—by this or any other author—and never surpassed. It was terrific, and Barrie knew it. In the midst of his grief he could still see, and more than appreciate, the perfection of his own art. The exquisite, limpid English had never run more smoothly, with deeper feeling, or more subtle sleight of hand. Sincere? In every possible way except one, and for that it was the pen, not the man behind it, that was again just the stronger of the two. The picture at the end, of Meredith, young once more, and striding up the hill as an empty coach rolls on towards Dorking, is superbly done. There is magic here, as well as immense craft. But Barrie didn't believe it. It wasn't his real philosophy; it never had been, for all his life-long literary love of ghosts, and it never would be. For him, always, without his pen, the dead were dead. He couldn't bear it, but he knew it. He could write like this, and approve what he had written, but it remained a work of art.

Lord Morley, ennobled last year, and one of Meredith's executors, wanted him to undertake the Biography. Barrie was flattered, tempted, but knew at the same moment that it was beyond his power. Later this would become a story; of how he had read through all the papers and records, and only then had reluctantly refused. At the time there was no sign of hesitation, though there are notes—just a few—for a shorter and more Barrie-like book. But even these came to nothing in the end. He just mourned, and remembered, and kept a flame burning year after year.

Yet Frohman mustn't be disappointed, and neither must the other Barrie who was his fellow-conspirator and friend. For a fortnight again, at the beginning of June, *Peter Pan* returned to the Vaudeville in Paris, and Frohman and the Barries—with Lord Esher's younger daughter as a guest—went over and stayed at the Hôtel Continental. Saw sights again, and other plays. The women shopped. C.F. transacted business, and Barric, whenever he felt like it, saw all the cables that came and went. Miss Chase of course in the party whenever her duties or other engagements allowed. And an English schoolboy, who escaped somehow from a Friday to Sunday, and recalls a lunch at Versailles, how Frohman afterwards refused to leave the car to look at either of the Trianons, and how he insisted on his faithful man Herbert—to whom he was so faithful too—putting this odd, youthful visitor back on the train. By the middle of the month the extravagant festival was over, the company dispersed until next Christmas, and Barrie was in London again.

July. Early in the month the official Censorship Committee was appointed, with Herbert Samuel as Chairman, and a mixed membership from the Commons and Lords, and received its Orders of Reference. It was to examine witnesses—it actually examined forty-nine of them, authors, managers, and others—and to issue a report. In preparation for this the witnesses had all to deliver statements in advance—with one more from Frohman (drawn up by Barrie), who would have sailed for America before the proceedings began—and though no one knew what the upshot would be, there was a renewed feeling that it was a very important affair. At this stage G.B.S. submitted a short play called *Press Cuttings* for a licence, and as it broke every established rule about the representation of living persons, he can hardly have been surprised at the result. It was banned, of course—though it was also immediately produced at a technically private performance—and whatever its merits or otherwise, there was an immense uproar from several of the more passionate crusaders. Great fun in a way, twisting the Lord Chamberlain's tail like this. Stimulating paragraphs for the public, and the Censorship once more very much in the forefront of the news. The Committee, conscientiously if inconveniently, was to sit through August and September, and as Barrie, even when not personally facing it, wanted to remain in touch, his plan was to stay at Black Lake. Sylvia and the boys were to spend the summer holidays in a furnished house on Dartmoor.

On July 28th—the day before the Committee was to start taking evidence, and also of the last performance of *What Every Woman Knows*—Barrie, who was down at Black Lake already and expecting his wife to join him, was told something by the gardener which made him telegraph to her that he was coming up to London instead. The gardener—provoked, it would seem, by some criticism of his work—had chosen this moment to reveal what his wife, who was the housekeeper, had noticed and kept bottled up since last November. At Leinster Corner Barrie asked if it were true, and Mrs. Barrie made no attempt to deny it. No more concealment, no more drifting, no more waiting for a moment which could never have been the right one, yet was bound to have come. She had fallen in love with Gilbert Cannan, it was quite true that the affair had been going on for the best part of a year, nobody else mattered to her, and she wanted to be divorced.

They went to the kind, wise Sir George Lewis—together, for he was a friend of both, and neither knew anything of the etiquette or complexities of the law—and another more than painful scene took place. Barrie would forgive everything, and never mention it again, if she promised to cut Cannan out of her life. She said that was impossible. He offered her a deed of separation, virtually on her own terms, but she refused that, too. It was as though, if she couldn't escape now, then she could never escape. She had been robbed of happiness, and now she had found it. She didn't want anything except freedom to marry her lover, and no argument or appeal of any description could make her budge an inch.

More, dreadful discussions and consultations. Cannan, more than twenty years younger, made strange proposals of his own; but it was the woman—cornered, desperate, yet still offering a challenge to life—who still was in ultimate control. She didn't care what she threw away, she wouldn't let herself care whom or how much she hurt. She was going to marry Gilbert Cannan, she wasn't going to excuse or defend herself, her whole determination—now that all hands had been forced by the disclosure—was unalterably fixed on this and nothing else. Remember, also—as we try to hurry through this part of the story—how much more scandal must be faced by anyone, at that period, when a marriage was broken up. Divorce was still unthinkable to millions. It just didn't happen, except in other countries, or to a small number of characters whom no one but similar

characters either knew or wanted to know. But its details were still lavishly reported in the Press.

So Barrie went before the Censorship Committee on August 6th, was examined, had to answer, and to listen—like the other witnesses—while such points were raised as whether Ibsen's plays were immoral or merely ridiculous. Shaw, who had preceded him, gave a brilliant performance; and so, later on and among others, did G. K. Chesterton, who somehow managed to appear as representing the average man. But Barrie wasn't thinking of the Censor now. He wouldn't let his friends down, but he makes no showing—how could he?—as a public entertainer or wit. He was thinking of the appalling thing that had happened to him, after fifteen years of marriage. He had failed. Miserably and disastrously, and everyone would know it. Next term—for Messrs. Lewis and Lewis were experts in procedure—he must go into court and give evidence of another and acutely unbearable kind. For it was all settled now. His wife had got her way. She was down at Black Lake—which had always been hers, but which he never wanted to see again anyhow. She was to keep the cars, and the chauffeur, and Luath. She had refused his suggestion of an allowance—and it wasn't until some years later, when she was in serious need, that he learnt of this, and would be generous, here also, for the rest of his life. But at the moment he had lost not only her, but everything. He was just stunned, and overwhelmed, and crushed.

He blamed her friends, and some whom he had thought were his own. He blamed himself, but only a very few were allowed to blame her. Yet if he heard that others had blamed him, he wouldn't and couldn't forget it. He wanted to escape, too, but he couldn't from the thoughts that never left him alone. The catastrophe was bringing him freedom, also, from a situation which for years could have had no other end. But the blind spot still hid this, or must be made to hide it. Down there in the depths of despair he turned away from the faintest gleam of comfort. Or his only comfort, as yet, was in the profundity of his own gloom. If he hardly ever spoke, and never smiled, he was satisfying some insistent and tormenting part of his spirit. The kind of courage that could have thrown any of this off was beyond him or must even be suppressed. Plenty of attempted sympathy, but extraordinarily little response. He was wounded, and couldn't help showing his wounds, yet it took remarkable affection or daring to refer to them, and the right word at

the right time could never be spoken, because it didn't exist.

People took sides, as they always do, but Barrie himself was either on both sides or always somewhere where he could be hurt again but couldn't be reached. For a few—Frohmán was one—black in this instance was so black, and white so white, that there was no confusion, and one can't say that this didn't help. If they were lucky, indeed, it was safer to take this attitude than to attempt the impossible task of interpreting or sharing the sufferer's point of view. Not always safe, though, and they weren't always lucky. The silences paralysed them, or their letters weren't answered. Some trifling flaw in expression had stabbed where it had only been meant to soothe. If all the pity and affection that were felt this year could have met all the criticism and harshness, one knows which would have won. But Barrie was writhing at the mere thought that his misery was known to others at all. How could they really help him in the first weeks and months? They couldn't; though one of them gets the first prize for trying, and earns more praise and gratitude than he is ever likely to accept.

A. E. W. Mason. Still an M.P., still an author, with at least a double set of responsibilities of his own. Busy, a man with dozens if not hundreds of other friends, but for this friend he gave up everything. It wasn't that he couldn't see more than one side, too, and it wasn't that there would be any reward. But now that he, also—and again from friendship more than anything else—had given his evidence before the Censorship Committee, he took Barrie off abroad. To Switzerland, with Gilmour as the second, faithful companion, for Barrie had thought for a moment that it would be a comfort if he learnt to climb. But it wasn't. He resented the guides' instructions, and the plan was given up.

So Mason climbed, while Barrie and Gilmour walked. In Zermatt, one evening, he introduced them to Edward Whymper, who talked of his own tragedy on the Matterhorn, now forty-four years ago. Towards the end of September the walkers went on to Lausanne, where a letter from Captain Scott—which had been following them round—told Barrie of the birth of a son, asked him to be godfather, and simultaneously informed him that a second Antarctic expedition was now definitely planned. This, and the meeting with Whymper, and other outward impacts, could momentarily rouse him. But never for long. The cloud came down again, and when they all returned at the beginning of October, Mason—as kind and patient

as ever—took him in as a guest in his flat. Number 17, Stratton Street. That's where he will be now for six weeks or so; hardly ever leaving it, in case he meets someone who knows him. Walking up and down when his host sets off for the House, and still walking up and down when he returns. He can't sleep. He can't work. There is an idea, coming from somewhere in the Scotch past, that all this is a punishment for his connection with the stage. The silences are as long and overpowering as ever. And Mason, though the burden grows no lighter, is as endlessly patient and kind.

On October 13th the undefended suit for divorce was heard before Mr. Justice Bigham; Barrie and the Black Lake gardener's wife gave evidence; and a decree *nisi* was granted, with costs. On the same day the Scott's infant son was baptised and given the name of Peter, but in the absence, as may be imagined, of one of his godfathers. On the other hand, it is remembered that this godfather did force himself round to their flat afterwards, where another life-long friendship may be said to have begun. Then back to Stratton Street, and to the walking up and down.

It was known and understood that he was only staying here from day to day, or from week to week, or until somehow he should feel able to move. At first he had quite intended to return, eventually, to Leinster Corner, which was still standing waiting for him. Then this seemed more and more impossible, and other friends came to the rescue, and earned a further prize. Lady Lewis, to start with. It was she—though Granville Barker brought first news of it—who went to see the flat in Robert Street, Adelphi, which had once been part of the old-fashioned Caledonian Hotel, and at the moment was still occupied by Miss Edith Craig. But Miss Craig was leaving, so Lady Lewis made up her mind. Arranged that Barrie should take over the lease, arranged for the disposal of Leinster Corner, arranged for his furniture to be moved, and found a married couple to look after him at his new address. Elizabeth Lucas attended to the decorating, and provided the shelves in the study and the blue-walled dining-room which some may remember, too. There was one dreadful moment when it was found that Lady Lewis had told the removal-men that they could take a shabby little table away, and when Barrie asked: "Where is my mother's table?" But it was recovered and followed the rest.

On November 20th he left Stratton Street, and slept or at any rate passed the night at 2, Adelphi Terrace House for the first time.

The third-floor flat—or fifth-floor flat, if you counted not from Robert Street but from its river frontage on the lower level—with its leaded casements looking south and east. South over the Embankment gardens, the Embankment itself, the Thames, and the wide-spread skyline beyond. East, in those days, along the front of Adelphi Terrace. Joseph Pennell, the American artist, and his clever wife were on the floor above. The Bernard Shaws were just across the street—"Everyone's famous for something," Gerald was going to say, presently, "and you're famous for living opposite Shaw." The Barkers would shortly be arriving in another flat, only a few yards away, over the Little Theatre. The Savage Club still occupied its old premises a few yards beyond the Shaws. No parking problems in 1909, and no thought yet that the Adelphi would ever be rebuilt. The quietest yet most central, of backwaters by day and by night. Beautiful buildings, glorious views—from Barrie's windows you could see right down the river to St. Paul's or up it to the Houses of Parliament—yet only a step or two into the roaring traffic of the Strand. An enviable situation, for anyone who could think of being envied. But that wasn't Barrie as yet.

A paragraph of praise here for Harry Brown. Or Brown, the new butler, whose wife was the new cook. He died in the same year as his master, though nearly ten years younger, but had to leave him—owing to his wife's illness—in the summer of 1922. That makes twelve and a half years of care and utter devotion, of an understanding which isn't always found in butlers, and of a cheerful courage through all his own troubles and all the dark moods which so often filled the flat. He was a north-countryman, short—though taller than his master—with a pleasant, blunt, smiling, English face. In that position it was his duty to be a watch-dog, both at the front door and against every change of atmosphere inside it. But still he was cheerful, and looked bright and brisk, and played with the Davies boys; made every guest feel happier and every unwanted visitor turn round and leave without offence. A strange household to enter; but he smiled, stuck to his standards, learnt a great deal which he never thought of telling anyone, and so became, in truth, a friend. A salute to Brown, and to Mrs. Brown, too. Well done, Lady Lewis; for they were helping already to build up something that was in very little pieces when Barrie first addressed them over his shoulder—because he was gazing out of

the window, and as yet seeing hardly anything, except his own black thoughts, even there.

Other friends would be on their way as soon as they were allowed, or dared. Gilmour among the first, and by invitation. E. V. Lucas, who will come to know this flat and its successor so well. A few more, to help if they could, or to go away feeling that all their efforts were useless and vain. Maurice Maeterlinck, hardly a friend but hardly to be refused, was there early in December to write that inscription on the wall. And there was one house at least which Barrie had been visiting ever since he had gone anywhere at all. 23, Campden Hill Square, with Sylvia Davies and her younger boys in it. No jarring or suspected criticism here, though the boys scarcely knew what had happened and would sometimes start a fresh silence with a thoughtless word. But then he had always loved them, even when they hurt him, and must always forgive them, too. Sylvia? Such an old friend now, as well as everything else. He still needed her, she was still the mother above all mothers, the first in his thoughts now, and indeed she still needed him. He had re-made her life in these last two years; he, too, had picked up the pieces and held them together; had put her in this house, called her extravagant and then gladly given her everything she could desire—except the years that were gone. She had let him do it, for even if there had been a choice at first, there was none when once he had begun. It was what he wanted, and why shouldn't she want it too? No reason, in a world where all is as it should be. Yet that world isn't this world, and in this world one knows, or learns, that sorrow is always stronger than happiness in the end.

She had put off her mourning, and though she would always be beautiful whether she thought of her looks or not, it was a joy to her friends to see her in her pretty things again. That summer, on Dartmoor, there had been sadness and sympathy over the blow to Barrie's pride, and the ending of something quite so close to all those earlier memories of her own; yet in herself she had seemed gayer and younger again—and indeed she was still only forty-two, and little Nicholas was still only five. She was laughing again, and again the boys were tumbling over her, or sometimes, at queer moments, feeling older than their mother. Towards the end of September she was down for a little while—with Peter—at the Lucases', who had now left both London and Kent, and had taken a house near Lewes. They, also, found her radiant and young. But



only a few days later she fainted suddenly in the hall at Campden Hill Square.

Doctors again. She might have taken no notice herself, but Barrie was scared. She was ill, they said, and it might be this or that, but for the present she must be treated as an invalid. So now she was in bed, in the room behind the drawing-room, looking pale and beautiful, and this was where Barrie must sit with her. George and Jack were at Eton and Dartmouth, but there were three boys at home for whom she couldn't and wouldn't spare herself. Then, at Christmas, five again. But their mother was still in bed. Think of last Christmas; of the holiday at Caux; of all that had happened since then. She still smiled crookedly, and Barrie saw that the boys had their Christmas treats. But she was no better, and the doctors were becoming more alarming. And so, ominously again, into 1910.

Another general election to start it off, on the joint issue of the Lords' Veto and Free Trade; and this—though no one knew it—would fill the House with members who, if they survived, would be there at the outbreak and suspension of almost world-wide war. The pendulum swung back; not far enough to change the Government, though quite enough to guarantee an indefinite period of political confusion; but Mason wasn't standing again, and even if he had been, Barrie was still in no mood to sit on a public platform. He was at the flat, or at Campden Hill Square, or—for a day or two at the end of January—staying with the Eshers again at their house in Windsor Forest. A sign that he could be seen somewhere now; that the cloud was beginning to lighten. And somehow, from a drawer in his desk at Adelphi Terrace House, he had extracted, and was now reading to his host and hostess, two one-act plays.

These, not the full-length play on which Frohman had counted, were to be his contribution to the Repertory season. One, gloomy, harking back to Ibsen and to secret scars, was called *Old Friends*. The other was that gay, witty, ironical, and brilliantly-polished bit of technical efficiency, *The Twelve-Pound Look*. Suggested, perhaps, by his own offer of a knighthood last year; but if so, that was only the spring-board. The little fable leapt from it in a glittering arc, and will always show the summit of his one-act, comic skill. And Frohman, of course, was enchanted by it. Exulted in it. Though still the season must go forward without the one play that

he wanted more than all the rest. If not the only play that he had really wanted at all.

But he never thought of turning back. At the end of the fifth annual revival of *Peter Pan*, the Duke of York's was closed for an elaborate constructional change. The notion was that if the stage were levelled, instead of being raked, then the same flats and rostrums could be used in any position, and that money would be saved in the end. It wasn't, of course, and this expense was about the last effort at economy. For each play in turn—with Boucicault and Barker as the two repertory producers—was somehow brought right up to the old Duke of York's standard, and again the best possible casts were engaged. It was magnificent; though there was hardly a chance, from the beginning, of commercial success. Yet Frohman was backing it, and seemed to believe in it, and almost everyone was too busy now—with four new programmes already scheduled for the first fortnight—to consider how the public were to change all their habits and provide the necessary support. The one word Repertory was still the answer to everything. Or for others, the one word Frohman. Intense enthusiasm in this strange fusion of forces. Barrie absorbed in it, building more dreams on it, and lurking behind it all.

Those four programmes made a fine showing for any theatre, if not for any box-office, and if they had been put on at the Court, in the older, simpler manner, and hadn't all been put on practically at once, the public, one may imagine, would have felt easier and might have let them pay their way. Galsworthy's *Justice*, Shaw's *Misalliance*, a triple bill with Barrie's two plays in it, sandwiched round an unfinished fragment by Meredith, and Barker's *The Madras House*. These were good names, and there were more good names among the players. There were also the two best producers—each in his own class—that any management could have found. Frohman, it may be added, presented nineteen plays in America this year, and six more—outside this particular season—in London. It wouldn't finish him, for nothing but death could do that. But he couldn't possibly make money out of it, and the only real question—for anyone cool enough to see it—was how much and for how long he was prepared to lose.

At the beginning of February, Barrie was plucked from all this planning and rehearsing, and found himself once more in the witness-box. A dispute between Addison Bright's partner and

executors had at last reached the Court of Chancery, and the whole, four-year-old story of the defalcations was dragged into the coldest light of day. Barrie saw this as a painful opportunity to defend his dead friend. The Judge, on the other hand, saw the chance of telling a distinguished author what he thought of his accountancy. These cross-purposes may actually have saved a more serious clash; but though his lordship must obviously have the ultimate advantage, the witness could still have his own opinion of the law. He emerged with another grudge, and a deeper determination than ever to avoid being seen elsewhere. A raw wound had been flicked by the mere smell of that stuffy court-room. He hurled himself back into the infinitely preferable stuffiness, with all its well-known hiding-places, at the Duke of York's.

*Justice* was presented on February 21st, *Misalliance* two nights later, the triple bill was added on March 1st, and *The Madras House* eight days after that. All four programmes were now running in an irregular kind of sequence, which was a tremendous feat of organisation, but also demanded exceptional concentration on the part of the public. In the case of grand opera they have always seemed able to rise to this; but there they have tradition to help them, while here everything, including the plays, was new. So there was confusion and irritation at the box-office, and a strong tendency to hang back until bolder spirits had discovered which programme was going to outlast the rest. If this had been the management's own policy, there can be no doubt that *Justice* and *The Twelve-Pound Look* (with Edmund Gwenn and Miss Lena Ashwell)—though rather an odd pair—would have gone forward while the others dropped out. For these were the hits. *Misalliance* was bewildering; *The Madras House*, whether they were right or wrong, proved a disappointment to admirers of *The Voysey Inheritance*; *Old Friends*—though Barrie published it afterwards—hardly pleased anyone; while the Meredith fragment, *The Sentimentalists*, even if it hadn't been a fragment, was the purest of caviar.

But the management—one uses this vague term for it because Barrie, Barker, and Boucicault were now almost as much managers as the man whose money was at stake—was pledged to repertory, and the system went struggling on. A revival, at the beginning of April, of Pinero's *Trelawney of the Wells* was another hit, but still had to take its turn with the rest. A revival of *Prunella*, by Barker and Laurence Housman, with full orchestral accompaniment, was

a further expensive and unprofitable addition. On May 3rd Anthony Hope joined the circle, with a dramatisation—not too well received—of his story *Helena's Path*. And then, three days later—or three days before Barrie's fiftieth birthday—every theatre in the country gave a self-interested as well as a patriotic gasp. No hope of good business for weeks now. Another reign had ended, and Edward VII was dead.

Nine and a half years, or very nearly, since his accession—which, as you may remember, took place a fortnight after that one and only performance of *The Greedy Dwarf*. Immense changes in England and the whole world. Changes that still seemed to be gathering speed, as motor-cars became more and more reliable and deadly, and aeroplanes roared, and hurtled, and crashed. Looking back, it seemed more than a generation since the end of the Victorian era. Looking forward, there was a far more urgent feeling of rocks and breakers ahead. Bogies were on every horizon. Ireland, Germany, the Balkans, and an endless vista of political difficulties at home. A very rich country still, a country at peace, and a country with enormous impetus or inertia which might yet save it and bring it through. All those big houses still, with all their tenants and retainers, and the long tradition going back for hundreds of years. Was it as strong as it seemed? What about the unemployed? What about the miners? What about Mr. Lloyd George?

One sees it now as an age already under a shadow, yet again as an age of extraordinary stability and security compared with any that has been known to us since. Its twilight glow seems soft and charming; almost, from this distance, as golden as the afternoon of the nineties. Man was preparing to destroy himself, and a certain number of women were undoubtedly quite insane about the game of Bridge, but Edwardian England didn't die with its King. And if you were a Liberal, as Barrie was, there was still a vast confidence in the sense and wisdom of the Government that was still in power. Relentless and overwhelming attacks on the public nerves were still only an occasional nightmare or the subject for a novel or play. And income-tax was still only a shilling in the pound.

So there was a slump in the theatre—but it had been worse nine years ago—and genuine mourning for King Edward, and a genuine welcome for King George. A feeling, as always, that a cold wind had suddenly blown through the Empire, and a momentary consciousness for everyone of a crack in the fabric of time. Then time

itself put even this in the background, and it seemed that the old rhythm was resumed. At the Duke of York's they were now gallantly rehearsing a play of suburban life by an unknown authoress, though Frohman had lost thousands, and this was to be the last throw. The experiment, which on that scale couldn't have succeeded anyhow, was drawing to its inevitable end. The suburban play was staged as expensively as any of the others, but June would see the last of the whole series, and there would be no more repertory after that.

Not that Frohman reproached anybody—his harshest treatment for anyone who tried his patience was to speak of him, to a lieutenant, as “your friend.” Not that he had lost any faith in Barrie, or was again interested in anything but future plans. As for Barrie himself, the game was over, and perhaps—since it was he who had really started it—he might have shown a little less calm and detachment when it ended in such costly defeat. But it was out of his mind now, too, and Frohman was the last to bring it back. He had written another one-act play—a short, impertinent skit on the theatre itself, a good deal of which can be traced back to that speech to the Playgoers' Club in March, 1904—and Frohman, who thought it the most brilliant thing he had ever read, rushed it into rehearsal at once. *A Slice of Life*. Mockery about stage triangles and stage conventions. Very short. A bit of thistledown, for the back drawing-room, or as a scene in a revue. But Frohman put three stars into it in the dying repertory season, and then laughed until he could hardly speak. A couple of years later he did the same thing at the Empire, and wrote and told Barrie—which can hardly have flattered him—that it had had more effect than *The Twelve-Pound Look*. It cropped up here and there for a bit at other theatres, and then faded away. It has never been printed.

Yet again it was a sign of returning spirits, or of cheerfulness breaking in. In April the divorce had been made absolute, and Mary Barrie, who had once been Mary Ansell, was now Mary Cannan. The wound to his pride was still there, but it was healing. The rallying and loyalty of friends had helped. The repertory season had certainly helped. Brown had helped, and the new atmosphere in which, without any doubt, there was distinctly more freedom than loneliness. Barrie was a bachelor in a bachelor flat, with the Savoy Grill Room—where he as well as Frohman now had a favourite

table—only a few hundred yards away. It was a part that he had missed in earlier life, and somehow one can't pretend that he didn't appreciate it and his rendering of it now.

All these months, or ever since the autumn, too, he had been calling at Campden Hill Square, talking to the doctors, providing comfort, and sticking—because he had to—to dogged, obstinate hope. And now, though Sylvia Llewelyn Davies was still pale and frail, and those who hadn't seen her since the beginning of her illness were shocked by a new look of smallness and slightness, she was getting up again sometimes, and hope, it seemed, wasn't entirely false. Perhaps it was because he had seen her so constantly and regularly that Barrie was less aware of the change. Perhaps, in a way, he could still only see her as she had filled his imagination so long. Perhaps, even, it was this that helped to achieve the temporary miracle. But she was better. She was going out now sometimes, to sit in a quiet garden a few doors away. And Barrie wasn't altogether anxious or unhappy, now that it was June.

A couple of odd memories, plucked from this far-off month. A night out—"let us go on the loose on Saturday" the invitation had said—with one of his very young friends. Dinner at the Savoy. The sudden selection of a theatre. There were only two seats left, in the back row of the stalls, but host and guest were thoroughly enjoying themselves when, alas, the host was spotted by the manager. Was forced, with his companion, into a stage-box, where one member of the audience never smiled again. Not funny at the time, and too sad to be funny now. Yet not without funniness during some of the years when there could be retrospect without the aching sense of loss.

Or here he is, again, in another box. At the Gaiety, with Frohman, and that same singularly fortunate boy. Frohman has bought *Our Miss Gibbs* for America, where Miss Chase is to star in it, and has seen it before, of course, but this is a new edition. The company nearly destroy themselves in their efforts to play to this box. The boy laughs loudly. Frohman never takes his eyes from them—which is more than can be said of Barrie—but again there is nothing, in either case, that can possibly be called a smile.

"Well?" says Frohman, when it is all over.

"I liked one little bit," says Barrie. "I think it was when they all said nothing and just ran to and fro."

Frohman seems completely satisfied with this verdict and his own bargain. But of course it's fun to be Frohman, and fun to be Barrie, and enormous fun for each to have an evening like this with the other.

It was in the same month also that the *Terra Nova*, the whaler which had been bought for Captain Scott's expedition to the Antarctic, sailed from Cardiff for New Zealand. Scott himself, though he had managed to put forward the date for its departure, was still held up for a week or so by some final matters of business. He overtook it, by travelling to the Cape on a liner, and it was Barrie's story—long afterwards—that at this last moment there had been some kind of coolness or misunderstanding between them. Whatever it was, it was quite clearly nothing that Scott remembered or that left the faintest grudge. The world would know this presently; but only Barrie would feel this personal, and extra, and secret pang of regret. Perhaps it should still be a secret. Yet he spoke of it, and it can only strengthen the truth of the tributes that he paid.

In July, it seemed that Sylvia Davies wasn't merely holding her own, but would be well enough to be moved to the country again. Barrie took a house for her, for the rest of the summer, in the village of Ashdon, on Exmoor. He went down there with her, left her, returned for a week-end or two, and then arrived there—as the boys' holidays started—for what was meant to be about a couple of months. At first she still seemed a little stronger. Then, suddenly and swiftly, she began to fade. It had been known for months that an operation was out of the question. It had just been hoped that the disease would stay its course, or that somehow—and even this for a while had seemed possible—it could be kept indefinitely at bay. But it was merciless. Or else, in this final phase, it chose the only means of real mercy. Two days before the end, as she lay there in bed, she asked for a hand-mirror. She looked in it, and laid it down. "Don't let the boys see me again," she said. And thus, on August 26th, at the age of forty-three, the beautiful, doomed Sylvia Jocelyn de Busson du Maurier, the widow of Arthur Llewelyn Davies, and the mother of George, Jack, Peter, Michael, and Nicholas, came at last to the end of all her sorrow and suffering, and died.

## 19

Darkness again, and silence to the outer world. It was worse—of course it was worst of all—for the five boys, yet Barrie was feeling at least five times the sadness of any ordinary friend. Again he sank under it, and again he rose to it. There were always two of him. For one this was the end of his own life also, and indeed something died in him in August, 1910. But the other, which in turn would be sub-divided, must still have the courage to go on. A quiet little funeral at Hampstead Parish Church—for Hampstead was always the du Mauriers' real home—and then meetings with relations, to whom was revealed his complete determination to make the five boys his own. It was spectacular, and again there was a sub-division that knew this, but he had never contemplated any other course. It was agreed and arranged, informally but definitely, that he was now their guardian and would be entirely responsible for their support. A childless bachelor—or a bachelor now to all intents and purposes—at the age of fifty was taking over two boys at Eton (for Peter was going there this autumn), a boy in the navy, and two more little boys of ten and six. The house in Campden Hill Square was his now, with its staff—including that still faithful and incorruptible nurse; and it was also his home, far more than the flat at present, as he set himself to keep it as a home for the boys as well. They had no choice, though this isn't to say that one of them would have chosen otherwise. Again it was something that had happened to them, though even the youngest may have felt how seldom it happened to others, and it wasn't difficult to return his love with affection. Of course they weren't as grateful as boys might be in a story, and of course he didn't ask for this, though he knew well enough how generous he had been. Yet the arrangement, even when they all got used to it, must always be a little strange. He was their father, and he wasn't their father. They could feel this, and in some ways it might even make things easier. Yet real fathers learn in the end to be grateful for gratitude, and a great deal more before they reach this point. No guardian can be blamed—as all children at one time or another have blamed their parents—for inflicting the gift of life. But somehow this doesn't actually strengthen his position. If he is guiltless here, it also



encourages him to expect a little more. His hopes are higher, and his disappointments are worse. He tries, perhaps, to be taken for granted, but doesn't always like it when he is. If fathers are attempting the impossible—as most of them are—that is nothing to what a guardian, or this kind of guardian, must perpetually face.

These five boys were, if anything, above the average in intelligence and sensibility. It would be easy enough to be proud of them, over and over again. But each had inherited and must develop his own individuality, must inevitably be difficult at times, or struggle desperately to express himself in his own way. Not one, by any possible chance, could remain just a symbol of this protective devotion and care. Barrie knew this; and then at times it was beyond his conception. The story of what he did for them, of the thought and trouble—always, after the beginning, in the midst of other interests and enthusiasms—which he gave to their education and careers, not to mention their colds, and measles, and chicken-pox, is an epic, once more, of a pledge fulfilled. Yet so often, presently, there must be just the extra possessiveness which a real father should hide. He couldn't help it. Sometimes they yielded to it, swiftly and charmingly, but sometimes they fought against it and had to go their own way. He was hurt. He forgave them. They forgave him. And then they must hurt each other again. All this isn't said in preparation for any disastrous breach or lasting dissension—though tragedy hadn't finished with Barrie and the Llewelyn Davieses yet. It is only to make it a little clearer that six personalities were involved. That adoption doesn't necessarily mean absorption where real human beings are concerned. One of the personalities was so tremendous, and for us, in any case, must always be so much in the foreground, that without such admonishment we might drift too far from the truth. That's all. Or all at the moment. Unless we just run through the five Davies boys once more.

A new note-book, dated October 22nd, 1910, and giving the owner's address as 23, Campden Hill Square, sets off again with notes on "The Second Chance" and for *Peter and Wendy*. Then, on the sixth page, and immediately above a list of the servants' wages, he has put down the boys' birthdays; for there is no one but the boys themselves to remind him of them now. George, we are thus also reminded, is seventeen. Still in Macnaghten's house at Eton, though with certain thoughts of Cambridge. Popular, clever, good-looking, an adept at friendship, a fine cricketer, a boy with youth

and responsibility gloriously mixed. "The most gallant of you all," wrote Barrie, in that dedicatory preface to *Peter Pan*, and none of the others would ever argue with that. Jack, sixteen, is still in the navy. His address, at any moment, will be H.M.S. *Cornwall*. In other words, he is through Osborne, and practically through Dartmouth. "From his earliest days," wrote Barrie, four years ago, "he has seemed to all of us cut out for a sailor." And that may well be; though no boy with Jack's inheritance is likely to find this the happiest time of his life. Tall and good-looking, too, with more than one resemblance to his uncle Gerald. His future is settled, but in this case responsibility is forced on youth. He isn't the luckiest. Or is he? At any rate his holidays are now called leave, and come at such odd times that he is apt to be in London when George and Peter, and then the others, are away. One also doubts very much, suddenly, whether Barrie would really have liked to be in the navy himself. So Jack, on harder terms as yet, must be set down as gallant too.

Peter will be fourteen in February. He's in college, as they say; or he's a Tug, while George is an Oppidan; or in other words he has gone to Eton with a scholarship. Another tall one, already, and clever, and rather sad. If he's fourteen in February, 1911, it is easy to calculate his age in August, 1914, and to foresee, now, how his future must be settled too. Poor Peter.

Michael was ten last summer. Still looks like his mother, and hasn't escaped her charm. An orphan at ten. Not wax for Barrie—not by any means—but you can steer or lead little boys of ten in a way that you can't do afterwards. The spell is still irresistible when it chooses, and here is the boy—quick, sensitive, attractive, and gifted—who is to be everything else that the magician most admires. There is no cloud between them. From Barrie, as yet, Michael has no secrets. You can call him the favourite, if you like—indeed there are plenty of moments when it is impossible to call him anything else—but his brothers are the last to resent this. He and Barrie draw closer and closer, and perhaps it isn't always Barrie who leads or steers. He has given his heart to Michael—or must one again say one of his hearts?—and has transferred an enormous part of his ambition. Is this dangerous? No answer. One mustn't say so. It may be; but there can be nothing wrong with such kindness and such love.

And so to the last of them. Nicholas. Or Niro. Seven in this

same autumn of 1910. He doesn't look like the others. Or at first he doesn't, and then he does. Nico has gaiety. Nico, though no fool, is occasionally the clown. The tragic past must always be mistier for him, and the strangeness of the present easier to accept. The spell holds him, almost without an effort, yet will never be quite so strong. One sees, perhaps, that if Nico had been the favourite in these years, as well as the youngest, he would have stood a remarkably good chance of being spoilt. But he isn't spoilt, though like all the others he is laden, often enough, with their Merlin's gifts. An extraordinary upbringing, by a nurse, four brothers, and a sentimental playwright who was forty-three when he was born. Yet the Davies-du Maurier chemistry is as full of interest and character as of charm. And Barrie, of course, was still being brought up, too.

He was becoming among other things, a kind of Etonian or old Etonian himself, as Peter followed George, and the plan became fixed and clear that Michael, and then Nicholas, should follow Peter. He had been half-suspicious at first, though the other half had been quite as determined as Arthur Davies that George should have the best. Then, because George was at Eton, it had to be the best. He began picking up echoes of its language. He began going down there—there must have been hundreds of visits between the summer of 1907, or George's first half, and the summer of 1922, when Nicholas left—and Hugh Macnaghten was already one of his friends. For a while he was still wary, for it can be difficult to imagine anything less like the true standard of comparatively Spartan education, which of course was the Academy at Dumfries. But he was fascinated. He had a standing here, *in loco parentis*, and as he put the spell on other boys, there was more than enough response and admiration to flatter him. A queer place, with its long, long tradition, its pride, and its almost equal ability to make and mar. "Your great English public schools! I never feel myself a foreigner in England except when trying to understand them. . . I am like a dog looking up wistfully at its owner, wondering what that noble face means, or if it does have a meaning. . . . Those schools must be great—and yet I don't quite see how it comes about."

Those words are from a speech to a girls' school, in 1924, and other words show how he still faintly suspected what he wasn't alone, as a matter of fact, in regarding as a considerable mystery.

But he had yielded to it, utterly, long before that. For the last part of those fifteen years, and beyond them, too, it was one of the biggest and most sacred passions of his life.

Back to 1910, which ends, still quietly, at Campden Hill Square. This new year's eve marked the last of the Lewises' legendary parties, for by this time next year Sir George Lewis—the first and greatest of the dynasty—would be dead. The entertainment, for so many whom Barrie knew, included some good-natured travesty on *Peter Pan*. But he wasn't there, and no one had really expected that he would be. So into 1911.

Which began with colds and influenza all round. With convalescence for Barrie, and perhaps a boy or two, at Brighton; where—either through Lucas or on his own account—he was now one of Harry Preston the hotel-keeper's immense circle of famous friends. In February Frohman presented *The Twelve-Pound Look*, with Miss Barrymore, at the Empire. Gloated over it himself, and would keep it going whenever and wherever the opportunity occurred. It had a good reception, too, but one-act plays are never likely to break records, and its first American run was comparatively short. There was no sign of a full-length play, however, though Barrie was working again at the flat. And sleeping there generally, by this time, in the middle of the week, though constantly dropping in at Campden Hill too. He was getting on with *Peter and Wendy*—in which a hitherto unknown pirate was now called Alf Mason. He was still thinking of "The Second Chance" and of *The Will*. Another note. "Murder play (dinner first act). Suppose woman engaged to host had murdered man." This at least shows that he hadn't given up hope of a longer play, but though there is no evidence that Sam Smith in *Shall We Join the Ladies?* was ever engaged to anyone, there is, in fact, no real evidence, either, that Barrie ever knew who the actual criminal was. He wanted to write a murder play, and went on wanting to write a murder play, and kept on twisting and altering that first act for months and years. He put in hints, and took them out again. He made it more and more elaborate, and the clues in it more and more contradictory and confusing. The mystery then became absolutely insoluble, or a mystery entirely for its own sake. It had beaten him, or he had beaten himself. Until he saw a further chance of mystification—which was after the solitary act was produced—he confessed quite frankly that he hadn't the faintest notion how the story went on. Then, under a fearful

oath of secrecy, one or two people were told that the host was the murderer himself, though even he was to be surprised when this came out. But there was never a complete scenario; so that *Shall We Join the Ladies?*—which had no title yet, and would have many others before it suddenly faced the public—can only and rightly be regarded as another of the one-act plays.

This was the spring when there was another stage-mystery—though it was solved almost at once—in *Fanny's First Play*. G. B. S. had written a Shavian farce—he himself has described it as a pot-boiler—had embedded it in some personalities about the leading dramatic critics, and had then decided to withhold his own name. The result, or one result, during rehearsals, was a repetition of the rumours that had attended *An Englishman's Home*. It was widely believed, for a week or two, that Barrie was up to one of his jokes again, and Barrie himself was perhaps just a little more irritated than amused. Shaw laughed like anything, at the play, at the rumours, and at this half-accidental pulling of his *confrère* and neighbour's leg. Then the truth came out, and he was certainly entitled to laugh again. For *Fanny's First Play* beat even *Walker, London*, by over a hundred performances. At the Little Theatre, which both authors passed every time they went out; and with the Granville Barkers by this time in residence upstairs.

These were the Adelphi friends now, but others were beginning to come in more and more. E. V. Lucas, particularly. And Frohman, of course, from the Savoy. It was Barrie's mood that he was in another kind of backwater, that he had become a bystander, that the main stream of drama and literature no longer concerned him. And of course he could get out of almost any invitation by pleading a prior promise to the boys. Yet his fingers still itched to write, and were only happy when doing it. He loved going about with Lucas, who had contacts with every conceivable and queer side of life. And the talks with Frohman never failed to revive the feeling that he, too, could manage a whole chain of theatres if he chose. Visits—and a great deal of laughter again—to Miss Chase, and to Frohman's favourite Marlow on the Thames. A visit—the first of many—to the F. S. Olivers near Reading. Friends of the Davieses. Frederick Scott Oliver combined directorships of important companies with very considerable literary distinction. He was Scotch, and so was his wife. Firm friends, these, of the very

best sort. But there need never, when the mood would allow it, be any shortage of friends.

Happiness is creeping back. Sadness is there, and never forgotten—its lines are on his face now for good—but again there is the distinct, profound, and mystical satisfaction in being J. M. Barrie. That is always waiting, with the very least encouragement, to return. He still watches himself, whether he is in a backwater or not, he still makes comparisons between past and present, and J. M. Barrie, in this Coronation summer of 1911, finds much once more for his secret pride. The world doesn't think him a failure, and though he won't admit that he thinks much of the world, he won't openly argue with it over this. Something still burns inside him, though he is resting for the moment as far as the world can tell. How, when the right times comes, is he going to surprise it next? In any way that he likes, of course. Perhaps—for still and always this is one of the dreams—by not being an author at all. And then he very nearly does surprise it, and himself, too.

Or how nearly? A bit of constitutional history, suddenly, which seemed urgent and important enough at the time. Deadlock over the Lords' Veto. The Liberals fuming, and ready, so they assert, for anything that will uphold the People's Will. Mr. Asquith will ask the King to create enough new peers—*more than four hundred* will be needed—to give him a majority in both Houses, and while the so-called backwoodsmen foam at the mouth, he makes out a long list. And Liberal literature is represented on it by Thomas Hardy, by Anthony Hope Hawkins, and by J. M. B. Lord Barrie? Lord Kirriemuir? Lord Adelphi? It might have been; but the other lords retreat. The crisis isn't exactly over, and won't be, until it and many others, are swept away by the biggest crisis of all. But Barrie remains J. M. Barrie, and it is still in this character that he so far overcomes whatever may be necessary as to put in an appearance at the great Shakespeare Ball.

That's a bit of social history, from the lavish days before the first great war. A tremendous masquerade at the Albert Hall. Society dressing up, and posing in tableaux, and dancing, in aid of the National Theatre. Barrie not dressing up himself, but watching from the Duchess of Sutherland's box; and being simultaneously impressed and contemptuous, until presently he slips away. The side or bit of him that moves among the less literary mighty is certainly blossoming again; and it was through this same beautiful

and fascinating duchess that he found the holiday home for himself and the boys this summer. Scourie Lodge, Scourie, Sutherland. On an inlet right up on the north-west coast of Scotland.

They were there through August—all except Jack, who was serving his country—and most of September. With visits from friends, who came and stayed at the neighbouring hotel. The boys fished, mostly for sea-trout, and picked up some Gaelic. While Barrie watched them, encouraged them, and—as he says in more than one letter—was their gillie. Wild, remote country, with no other occupation. But the boys didn't only fish because he wanted them to fish. It was one of the best holidays of the lot.

Then Eton claimed two of them, and Wilkinson's two more. Barrie still had his two London addresses—the one for work and a bachelor life, the other for domesticity at week-ends. From the former he was attending rehearsals again. A revival of *The Twelve-Pound Look* for some special matinées of a triple bill at the Little Theatre. A revival of *What Every Woman Knows*, which would run for two months, or until *Peter Pan* came round again, at the Duke of York's. But without Gerald, who had parted from Frohman at the beginning of the year, and was now an actor-manager at Wyndham's. C. M. Hallard played his old part.

In the same month—October—the new book appeared. *Peter and Wendy*, with illustrations by F. D. Bedford, an artist friend of Lucas's. Published by Hodder and Stoughton in London, and by Scribner's in New York; the first new book for either of them for nine years. A steady more than a sensational seller, but a very favourite present for children in two countries this coming Christmas. An abridged version, "arranged for school use," was issued, four years later, in conjunction with the Oxford University Press. And yet another edition, illustrated this time by Mabel Lucy Attwell, six years after that. This is how one treats a classic—the bibliographer lists a dozen further versions for which other authors were allowed to supply the text—and it was to this that the legend had grown. But Barrie's own version was mostly, as was said, a transcription of the play. And here, though he still thought of novels sometimes, and made notes for them, and even began them, is the last of the full-length books.

In bed again, with bronchitis, for Christmas. This will be part of the story so often now, through all the winter months and sometimes in the summer too, that it must be taken, alas, as a regular bit

of background. No cold ever seemed to leave him until it had found its way to his chest, and no one, whatever he did, was more vulnerable to colds. You must think of him coughing now, starting to smoke too soon, and coughing again. Interminably. Immense powers of resistance, to pull him through time and again, and never yet—except when absolutely knocked out—could he treat himself as an invalid. But he was fifty-one, and growing no younger. There was strength still, to bear this and all the other burdens. Amazing rashness and courage in the midst of every bout. But he knew, and a few others knew, that sometimes he was middle-aged.

From a letter, written almost at the end of this year. "My poor cough is getting on. I can now listen to odd things happening inside me. I seem to have two little doors one on each side of me, and listening intensely [*sic*] (though it's rather like eavesdropping) I hear them opening and shutting. I conceive tiny little figures running in and out, and wonder what they are up to." The conception remained or returned, and presently—as we shall see—would suggest yet another play. But what didn't suggest this? The desk called, the pen was always waiting, and the fear of second-rate ideas seemed so much less important again than the effort of leaving any idea alone. So he wrote, constantly; suspecting or even knowing sometimes that it was an end in itself. Until again the spark took hold of something, and he forged happily ahead.

Towards the end of January—we are now in 1912—he was elected to the extremely distinguished though now no longer existent Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature; proposed by Austin Dobson and seconded by G. B. S.; but never took any particular part in its once rather glorious meetings. And a week later Frohman slipped *A Slice of Life*, with Miss Barrymore and her brother John, into the bill at the Empire in New York. The joke was well taken, though still best of all by the manager, who indeed at this moment had little to make him laugh. For Fate was turning against the great C.F. Not only had that repertory season hit him hard, not only had it reduced the scale and scope of his London ventures, but there had been ill luck in America too, where already the great days of the gilt-edged tours were drawing to an end. Taste was changing, films and burlesque-shows were cutting into the profits, and setting a new and lower standard for what the public was prepared to pay. And then, with the luck still running away from him, he became seriously ill with articular rheu-



matism, and for the rest of his life was never really out of pain. Never really free again from financial difficulties, either, as was perhaps bound to happen in the end. Yet he was just well enough, or brave enough, to be over in London again early this year, when Barrie arranged for him to see Sir Alfred Fripp.

"Frapp was at him," says a letter, recording one of the best of the Frohman stories, "and just as he was about to begin, happened to ask him what English doctor he had had on some previous occasion. F., who is not strong on names—he muddles up names so extraordinarily that if he comes on one that sticks to him he at once makes the bearer a Star—said he had Hamilton Bruce. This turned out to be Robson Rouse. But this is how he had him. Having pains all over he was advised to go to R. R. Instead of going himself he sent an emissary who represented himself as Frohman, described the pains as his own, was examined and told what to do, and Rouse never knew that it had not been the real patient. This so amused Fripp that he could hardly proceed."

There is an echo of this story in *A Kiss for Cinderella*. Poor Frohman; but Fripp couldn't cure him either. For more than six months this year he was so ill that he was unable to leave his room at the Knickerbocker; though between the bouts, or in the midst of them, he still tried to conduct his business, always with courage and sometimes with fresh hope. If Barrie would only come over and see him. But Barrie didn't. Either the invitation wasn't urgent enough, or the effort seemed too great. He stayed in England, and other friends and playwrights must try and take his place. Presently, also, C. F. would be limping about again on a stick—the stick that would never leave him now—as the struggle still went on. If only, once more, there had been a new, three-act Barrie play waiting for him this spring, even articular rheumatism might have yielded to a fresh outburst of the old enthusiasm. But there wasn't. Everything was still falling into one act. Or at the most, as in the case of *Half an Hour*—which had just been finished—into three scenes which were far too short for the big come-back that Frohman still dreamt of at the Empire and the Duke of York's.

*Rosalind*—another one-acter—was also on the stocks. And the play which would presently be the first act of *The Adored One*, but was as yet with no thought of any continuation. Plenty, in all these ideas, for Frohman's encouragement and admiration. But they weren't what he really wanted. They weren't *The Little Minister*,

which had started it all, and they weren't *What Every Woman Knows*, which was beginning to look like the end of it. Barrie could still do no wrong, and *Peter Pan*, after its seventh revival, was still making money on the annual tour. But the new Pinero play at the Duke of York's—now his only London theatre—was only a very moderate success. Couldn't there possibly be a real Barrie play for the autumn?

No. It just didn't seem to be coming. Frohman went back to New York, and presently very nearly died there. But Barrie, it seemed, must still be guided by his own ideas and his own insistently independent pen. Quite rightly, as an author or an artist. With every other justification on an income which, even in this year, came to nearly twelve thousand pounds. So he went on writing his little plays, or amusing himself with another flare-up over the censorship—the case of *The Secret Woman*, by Eden Phillpotts; which was refused a licence by Redford's successor, and then privately produced by a gang of authors at the Kingsway. Phillpotts came up from Devonshire for this, spent the night with Barrie, and “informed me candidly that he thought it a very poor thing.” This quotation, like some other recent extracts which haven't always been acknowledged, is taken from a letter to Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland; and here is another of the same date. March 17th, 1912.

“This battleship you are to launch sets my mind off on a new subject. A battleship and a young woman are launched on the same day. Ten years afterwards which of them has done most good or harm? Would the country have been saved a million if instead of launching the ship they had just drowned the lady? There is something in this.”

Gay thoughts still, in one, at any rate, of his numerous and separate lives. But nobody shared them all. He was one kind of parent, as it were, at Campden Hill Square. Another on his visits to Eton. He was a playwright. He was the power behind other playwrights. He was laughing or larking with Lucas or Mason. He was dining with a duchess, or he was entertaining at the Savoy. He was helping and protecting his relations, and plenty of other beneficiaries too. He was alone, remote, with one leg tucked under him, smoking and pondering in his bachelor flat. No one can say that in any and every aspect he wasn't himself, yet he was the one who insisted on keeping them apart. He let you see bits of the other lives—to tantalise you, perhaps, or to give you a

hint of his mysterious plurality—and then he quietly closed the door. There was no real danger of anyone ever understanding him completely, but no friend must ever stray without permission from the compartment that had been chosen. These were the terms for every friend by now.

Yet much as he gave them all, he took from them, too. We called him an ostrich once, but he was also a good deal of a very human chameleon. Something considerably less than all things to all men; but the different friendships quite clearly changed his colour. He was still protean, by nature as well as practice and principle. Just about now, for instance, a Mrs. Hugh Lewis, whose husband was a Welsh landowner, sportsman, man of business, and county councillor, happened to send him a drawing which her little four-year-old-son had made after listening to *The Little White Bird*. Not—as Barrie was the first to appreciate—as bait for an autograph, for she didn't even give her name. But the picture amused him, there was the clue of an address, and he sent the artist a letter and a copy of *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. When it turned out—for of course such a gift must be acknowledged—that the child was a god-son of George Meredith, this and something else in his mother's letter made Barrie want to go further. Entry, accordingly, into the long list of friendship, of the Welsh Lewises—so called to distinguish them from the Lewises of Portland Place—who proved, in every member, to be just the sort of family that he could both love and admire. There was a gap, it seemed, in the cast, and they began filling it at once. He must know all about them. They must come and stay with him—as they did, presently and serially—and he would stay with them. As an expert on all of them; almost, after a very short time, as though he were one of the family too. No limits to this sort of feeling, when the right people or the right person came along. But he had to choose, and mustn't ever be chosen. That must remain another of the unbreakable rules.

March 29th. No one in England, or anywhere else now, knew as yet what this meant. No one in England, or anywhere else now, knew as yet that Captain Scott and his four companions had reached the South Pole on January 18th, to find that Roald Amundsen and his own little party had forestalled them by just over a month. The whole world would know the story in time, and it is one that will never be forgotten. But on March 29th, 1912, when Scott made the

last entry in his journal—only eleven miles from One Ton depot—and then lay down to face the end, Barrie must still believe or hope, like others, that the carefully-organised expedition would yet return in triumph. He was planning the boys' Easter holidays, which they were to spend with their grandmother, old Mrs. du Maurier, at Ramsgate. He wasn't going away himself this year, for he was still working hard on *Half an Hour*, and *Rosalind*, and on *The Adored One*—which at present he was rather thinking of calling "The Murderess."

April 15th. Disaster again. The worst and most shocking, so far, in the history of the sea. The *Titanic*, 45,000 tons, the largest, newest, and safest ship in the world, strikes an iceberg on her maiden voyage to America, and sinks with the loss of over fifteen hundred lives. The world learns of this swiftly, and more than seven hundred on board are saved, through the miracle of wireless telegraphy. But two of Barrie's old friends have gone. W. T. Stead, at whom he had mocked in *Better Dead* but who had published his first article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. And Frank Millet, the Broadway artist and for a while the Broadway cricketer, who had dined so often at the house in Gloucester Road. Presently there will be long inquiries, in both countries, new rules and regulations will be made, the ice-patrol will be organised, and so-called humanity will take a pledge that no such catastrophe shall ever happen again. But Destiny knows better. Destiny, it may be, is just trying its hand at hecatombs as everything moves steadily and remorselessly toward the twilight which is less than two years and four months away.

On May 1st there was a surprise for the children in Kensington Gardens, though some of them must have noticed a queer sort of screen by the side of the Serpentine during the last few days. This morning it had gone, and there for all to see, and at present even to touch, was Sir George Frampton's statue of *Peter Pan*. Its appearance was less unexpected to those who read newspapers or had attended last year's summer exhibition at the Royal Academy, where the figure and decorative base, now cast in bronze, had been shown in an earlier state. Moreover, its conception or origin went back nearly two years before that. It began with the swings, sand-pits, and children's shelter in the north-west corner of the Gardens, which were one of the Right Hon. Lewis Harcourt's many civilised

improvements as First Commissioner of Works. Or it may have begun with Barrie's contribution to the plan, which is said to have consisted of more than the mere permission and sanction for panels representing some of Peter's adventures to be placed in the shelter. At any rate he was now in close touch with Harcourt; Harcourt was an enthusiastic admirer of the legend and the play; and somehow the further development took place. There is no doubt, in fact, that it was Barrie himself who both commissioned the statue and paid for its erection, with warm support not only from Harcourt but, as was essential, from King Edward VII as well. It all took time, of course; eighteen months or so for the original model, and another year while it was first exhibited and then cast; and meanwhile the donor had long ceased taking his daily walks by the site which had been agreed. Then, however, the statue appeared—on the spot, it was now stated, where Peter landed from his little boat—and with no more ceremony than the removal, early on this May-Day morning, of the workmen's screen. And there, of course, through generation after generation of children and their perambulators, it still remains. As much part of the Gardens as the Round Pond or the Albert Memorial; or the little boundary stones which Barrie had pretended were the graves of children locked in at night.

In other words—and as other authors couldn't help noticing and commenting—a living author had put up a statue of one of his own creations in a position where it could never be forgotten or overlooked. And so he had. Whatever else might be said of his gift to the nation, that was the plain fact. "How like him!" said some. "How dare he!" said others. And there were others, again, who sprang to his defence. Yet the children, who were the real judges, adopted and accepted it, passed on the legend, and fingered whatever they could touch until the bronze glistened despite the London soot. "That's Peter Pan," they were told, or told each other. To them it seemed perfectly natural that the statue should be there. Unlike those contemporary authors and critics, they never dreamt of asking how it had appeared.

There is a very tiny new note-book this year. A birthday present, it seems, from Nico, who has saved himself undue effort by inscribing it with the words "Jim Matt Barr." On the next page the new owner has put his initials, address, and the date. And then on go the ideas again. "Play. Crowd of characters in various plays in

waiting-room." "Play on Reincarnation." "Play on French Duel." That last is a reference to Henry Bernstein, who might have challenged Barrie himself—but didn't—when he called on Frohman once, and Barrie sat there pretending to be the secretary. Then the notes turn suddenly to a list of flies for sea-trout, for already there were plans for another Scotch holiday. But that won't be until the end of July, and first—earlier in that month—there is another aspect of the boys' sportsmanship.

George Davies, as good as nineteen now, was in his last half at Eton. But though he had bowled against Winchester two years ago, this was his first and final appearance in the great match against Harrow at Lord's. Chosen again as a bowler—left-handed, like his first coach—he not only made 59 in the first innings, and 17 (four boundaries and a single) in the second, but also dismissed the Harrovian top-scorer and brought off a sensational catch at short leg. And Eton won. His cup, one may imagine, was pretty full that day; and so—with memories of a soft ball aimed at a tree-trunk in Kensington Gardens—was that of one who watched him. This was something that Barrie had prayed for, and he had got it and gloried in it, even though George was all but nineteen. In the autumn he was going to Trinity College, Cambridge, and for a while only Peter—a fine cricketer, too, though the luck just kept him out of the first eleven—would still be at the school of schools. Time flying, as one looked back, but how much more important at the moment to look forward; for this summer, though Jack in the navy must still be out of it, rather particular arrangements had been made for migrating to the north.

The house, rented as long ago as April from Sir Samuel Scott, bore the name of Amhuinnsuidh, and was in North Harris—which to anyone but the Scotch would be the south part of the Island of Lewis—in the Outer Hebrides. Barrie, with Michael, Nicholas, and of course the indispensable nurse, was in the vanguard; and here you should turn to the last paragraph of the Dedication to *Peter Pan* for an account of the magic that brought Johnny Mackay—the gillie of last summer at Scourie—to meet them on the pier at the Kyle of Lochalsh. A miracle specially arranged for Michael. The first guests were the E. V. Lucases, with Audrey, the Anthony Hopes, or Hawkinses, with their little daughter too, and once more A. E. W. Mason. George and Peter were to follow in a fortnight or so, when released from their O.T.C. camp. Wild country; the house—but

there was a tennis court and some cricket—between lochs and an arm of the sea; and all personal transport on ponies. Fishing, however, was the real beginning and end of the whole visit, with Barrie again as supernumerary gillie, though he was doing some writing as well. The notion, born of bronchitis, of little doors opening and shutting inside him, and of tiny figures running in and out, was turning into yet another one-act play. It was to be called "A Fantasy," or perhaps it was to be called "The Little Policemen," and there was a kind of topical truth or satire in that the policemen were ousted by far more competent policewomen, and that the invalid—a Mr. James—was an "anti-suffrage" politician. This, it was planned, should go into a triple bill at the Duke of York's in the autumn, though even the author had his doubts as to whether anyone would understand it. Meanwhile, two more visitors arrived.

Lord Lucas—still better known to his innumerable friends as Auberon or Bron Herbert—and his younger and only sister Nan. The link here, some time in the past twelve months, was again the Duchess of Sutherland, but it had taken very little to place them both on pedestals, too. A brother and sister; there was always something special for Barrie in that, for wasn't he an expert on the relationship? Here was an ideal and idealised example. He had felt at once the extraordinary strength and closeness of their affection, and no one could have overlooked their abounding vitality. Lord Lucas, tall and good-looking, and still an open-air athlete in spite of the leg which he had lost as *The Times* correspondent in the Boer War, had every quality and virtue which can be summarised as Elizabethan. He was fearless, but he also bore all the higher and humaner stigmata of Balliol. For some years now he had seen his pathway in politics, and was at this time parliamentary secretary, in the Asquith Government, to the Board of Agriculture. Yet this was only one of his interests and enthusiasms. He justified both wealth and aristocracy by the fullness and service of his life. A hero, even without Barrie to say so. But his niche here was ready, and he filled it completely until his gallant death, and long after that. Through him, also, there was an immense revival in Barrie's own political leanings, and in the fascination of political power. They talked Liberalism together this summer, and re-cast the world, as the shadow which hung over it was still hidden. Bron Herbert will be a very fine and powerful influence, bringing out the best that is

there, and profiting by it, too, for more than another four years.

As for his sister, with her brilliant blue eyes and unforgettable laughter, she was a hero's sister and, again not only for Barrie, a heroine herself. She too had the qualities, only slightly and appropriately modified by her sex, of invincible courage and an exceptional mind. She laughed this August—though both Herberts, as they well might, had arrived on this rather unusual visit with some natural and nervous qualms—and soon made her mark, though above all with the host. One wasn't too fanciful with Miss Herbert, though one had, it seemed, to work tirelessly for her admiration. And so there were more mutual and valuable gifts, and sparkling emissions to make her laugh again, or to elicit the best—as always in this case—that Barrie could provide. Here would be lifelong friendship and affection, too.

Something else about Amhuinnsuidh, apart from the guests and the fishing, and the fine weather—which ought to have spoilt the fishing, but didn't. For here, also, there was a Kilmeny legend, of a girl taken and returned by the fairies, so that—again in that Dedication—Barrie speaks of it as the place “where we caught Mary Rose.” The note-books have shown that in a sense she was in the net already, and there would be at least one more stimulus—a Norwegian story, on the same theme, told by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen—before this part of the play took final form. But it was Amhuinnsuidh, true enough, that placed its second act on an island in the Outer Hebrides. And it was Johnny Mackay, though he was anything but a student of Euripides, who gave Cameron most of his simple and touching charm.

So back, about the middle of September, to the duplicate London life in the Adelphi and Campden Hill Square. Now, also, or soon enough, there were rehearsals once more—the first, for a new play, since the repertory season more than two years ago—in preparation for the Triple Bill. This would include a Shavian discourse on sexual morality—a sign, with all respect to its author, of the state of Frohman's health—called *Overruled*; and a somewhat heavy essay in eeriness by Pinero, called *The Widow of Wasdale Heath*. But after all there were no Little Policemen. The play had been typed—as usual more than once—and Barrie had re-read it, but the truth was that neither he nor Boucicault now thought it effective or entertaining enough. So it was laid aside, where it still remains, and *Rosalind*—with Miss Irene Vanbrugh, and Boucicault's nephew,



Donald Calthrop, in the two principal parts—came out of the drawer instead.

These, then, made up the programme, and a strange assortment it was. There is a curse or something like it—or so the profession insists—on all Triple Bills, and it wasn't lifted on the evening of October 14th. The critics, whether or not they could make head or tail of G. B. S., were convinced that he hadn't written a play at all. They, and the first-nighters too, found more yawns than goose-flesh in *The Widow of Wasdale Heath*. *Rosalind* scored enormously by contrast, for it was neither puzzling nor gloomy. Moreover, it exhibited Miss Vanbrugh at the top of her most enchanting form. Yet apart from the fact that the plot, such as it is, had been used before—a whole covey of critics quoted Charles Reade's *Nance Oldfield*—it distinctly lacked the sharper polish of *The Twelve-Pound Look*. It contained several passages for which a post-war world would coin the word "hot-making." And neither author nor audience really quite knew what happened at the end.

It came much nearer to popular success, though, than either of the other two plays. It was and remains a fine vehicle for any actress in the title-rôle, though no one has ever managed to make very much of poor Charles. And that night it set off on a considerable career. In a few weeks the Shaw and Pinero plays were withdrawn, but *Rosalind* stayed on as curtain-raiser to a full-length play. At the beginning of December it enjoyed the honour of a Command Performance at Sandringham, and though its run ended when the theatre was closed for rehearsals of the ninth *Peter Pan*, Miss Vanbrugh must have appeared in it many hundreds of times since then. And presently Miss Maude Adams would add it to her American repertoire, too. Only Golding Bright, the agent, can have any notion quite how many thousands of performances have been given in the provinces, in other countries and languages, and by amateurs.

November 12th. The antarctic winter was over. A party from the *Terra Nova* had at last been able to move over the Great Ice Barrier. "After we had marched 11 miles due south of One Ton," writes its leader, "we found the tent. . . . Inside were the bodies of Captain Scott, Doctor Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers. They had pitched their tent well, and it had withstood all the blizzards of an exceptionally hard winter." But still it would be three more months before they returned with their story to New Zealand. Its secret

was still mercifully or tragically hidden from the rest of the world.

Barrie, who had promised to take the Chair at the November meeting of the Academic Committee of the R.S.L., and whose note-book shows considerable preparation for an address, was down with bronchitis again, and the meeting was never held. "I write from bed," he announces to a young friend on November 21st, "with Brown rubbing me violently at intervals. The world forgetting by the world forgot, says I to myself at such times, and a bedroom fire seems to make amends for all things. I had one bust yesterday however. At 12 a.m. (*sic*) I suddenly gave birth to an idea for a play in one act, rose and dressed in its honour, wrote the whole thing, stock, lock and barrel, and returned to bed a hero. I rather think your letter must have suggested it, as it has to do with the Censor. . . ."

This was the playlet called *The Dramatists Get What They Want*, which found a strange home in another month. But it wasn't the only play that emerged at this time from the bedroom. A few days earlier E. V. Lucas had come in to see him, bringing a three-act comedy which he had written, and knowing, whatever its merits, that Barrie would always be ready with help and advice. They took rather an odd form, though, on this occasion. The more experienced dramatist not only insisted that the three acts could and should be turned into one, but that the whole scene and setting must be moved from England to Scotland. So Lucas cut, Barrie took over and translated, and the play was almost immediately put on, by Alfred Butt, at the Palace, as a vehicle for Miss Laura Cowie and some of the gifted Moffat family, who had just finished their six hundred performances of *Bunty Pulls the Strings*. Barrie's share in it was hidden, and it wasn't a success. But Lucas had the rueful satisfaction of being told by more than one critic that he would probably have done better if he hadn't tried to be Scotch.

Ink, instead of pencil, in the note-book, shows that Barrie was back in his study again, and the first entry gives a list or résumé of no less than thirty projected plays. Some are familiar—old friends, or new notions that were already on the stocks—but others can now only tantalise us. "Man who brings up 4 girls." Though one can't see the play, one can see the twist that suggested that. "The Toy Theatre." "The Weather House." And, if you please, "The Nosey Inheritance." "Short play on terrific respectability of stage nowadays

(taken place of the church).” There is the old hand, who has known the coulisses, as a playwright, for twenty-seven years now, and for far longer as one under the spell. He sighs for the vanished rogues and vagabonds, though still even this sort of idea must be entered as grist for a play. Yet isn’t he, in fact, responsible for a good deal of the change himself?

He has broken down barriers, made his own rules, experimented daringly and wildly. Already he is toying with ideas for films, which to Frohman is like toying with the Powers of Darkness. Already there are notes here and there which are headed not “play” but “revue.” And now egged on, though willingly, by Lucas, he is showing very little resistance to the breaking down of another barrier; the one between music-halls and the legitimate stage.

This is the new movement, and it’s growing. Presently it will grow so much too fast, and stars, or some of them, will show so little respect for variety audiences—treating them, one is afraid, as a source of easy money when other methods fail—that the announcement of a so-called “sketch” in a programme will keep the public out. They’ll go to the films, and variety will have to put its house in order and fight hard to win them back. But that isn’t yet. It was big news, in October of last year, when Miss Vanbrugh took *The Twelve-Pound Look* to the Hippodrome. In January there was a full-page cartoon in *Punch*, when Tree temporarily deserted His Majesty’s for the Palace. And others are showing signs of tumbling over each other to be in the new and still highly remunerative fashion, too.

So there was E. V., who knew everybody in all worlds, who loved the smell and colour of music-halls, who had already supplied gags and material to comedians, and was now writing lyrics, as they are known, under the name of F. W. Mark, more than delighted to lure Barrie through new stage-doors. There, also, was the Savoy Grill Room, where so much is hatched, and where Barrie knew many more habitués than in some moods or moments he was prepared to admit. And now, once more at the Hippodrome, young Albert de Courville—an exceedingly live wire from Fleet Street—was engaged in creating an extravaganza on the model of shows at the New York Winter Garden Theatre, which was going to make more than a page of history on the variety stage. Noise, speed, the loudest orchestra, the brightest lights, and the biggest production-numbers—that was the new and triumphantly successful policy in

Cranbourne Street. The real and prodigious birth in London of the Anglo-American Revue. *Hullo, Ragtime!* Book—so far as it didn't consist of imported specialities—by Max Pemberton and de Courville. Starring the tremendous Broadway personality of Miss Ethel Levey. Thundering out the new rhythm of Irving Berlin and other syncopators with everything that could be given it by brass and drums. An infection to set England dancing to quickened measures on the crust of the crater. Very much, it must be seen now—though no recognised or legitimate Muse was involved—a blazing sign of the times.

Into this hotch-potch, at the last moment, went the skit or sketch which Barrie had just written—"stock, lock and barrel"—in the middle of the night. His name wasn't on the programme, because he wouldn't have it there, but he made no secret of the authorship to his friends. It was also, perhaps, a slightly treacherous skit, for it was the dramatists, far more than the Censor, who were actually guyed. It stuck out, of course, in the oddest way, so that those who had come merely for the noise and lights were a little taken aback, while others, who detected its quality, were amazed by the lack of response. Presently, also, though *Hullo, Ragtime!* was played twice daily for four hundred and fifty-one performances, *The Dramatists Get What They Want* was quietly dropped. Though presently, again, in the following autumn, Frohman tried it out—not very successfully, for it was a mystical and esoteric little work—in New York. This, however, was how Barrie attended two sets of rehearsals in December, 1912—at the Hippodrome and the Duke of York's—and the music-halls certainly bit him as a fresh means of expression. Clever people here, tremendous mechanical possibilities, and complete freedom, as it seemed, for anyone with his name and position to risk any odd experiment that crossed his mind. Not very good, if one may dare to say so, for dramatic discipline. But he didn't care. The search for the first-rate seemed, in practice, less important at this queer period than that he should write whatever he chose. Like Lucas, he must be in touch with or have a finger in everything. Was he still watching himself? Of course. Then where was he going? Wherever his fancy led him, but particularly wherever it could do what other people still didn't expect.

And crammed with ideas and energy still, in all the multiple lives. In the stalls at St. Martin's Lane, watching Boucicault at work on another new Wendy, and deciding, quite rightly, to scrap

the big minifying lens which—a love of tricks having temporarily proved stronger than a belief in suggestion and imagination—had been brought in last Christmas to show a real and living Tinker Bell. Smoking and prowling at the Hippodrome. Writing at the flat. Seeing and corresponding with the innumerable friends. Week-ending at Campden Hill Square, where nothing suddenly was more important than the brand-new outfit of white shirt and Etons in which Michael attended Wilkinson's breaking-up party. Or than the amount, on the same occasion, that Nico had managed to eat.

There is a record of a little celebration, in the Adelphi, on New Year's Eve. The Barkers came in for supper, after their professional labours were over, and G. B. S. was expected, but didn't arrive till about one. He had been, he explained, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell. "This," says the record, "is a terrific romance, and at last Shaw can blush. But which of them it is that listens I can't make out."

No mystery about this, for it is all in Mrs. Campbell's autobiography, including Shaw's letters, about which he blushed so little that ten years later it was she rather than he who decided which should be kept out of the book. This was the time of her long, baffling, and desperately serious illness which had followed an accident in a taxi; and of Shaw's thoughtfulness and kindness during the many months that it lasted no one will ever know all. He was openly, frankly, though always Shavianly, infatuated. Her teasing brilliance dazzled him. He would have flirted with her, if she had been in a fit state to be there, on the house-tops. He contributed enormously to her eventual recovery, and she—flattered, though few women can have been more familiar with flattery—retorted by calling him "Joey"; the traditional name for a clown. There was immense ultimate safety here, as each well knew, yet Shaw both wrote and said what he thought at the time, and there were richly enjoyable fireworks at her house in Kensington Square.

Barrie had known her slightly, and admired her very great gifts, for years. You may remember that she was down on the list of possible mothers in a play about children—which was never written—in the very earliest days at Leinster Corner. The teasing brilliance hadn't always made him smile, for no woman, perhaps, should ever be quite so clever and funny at the same time. He knew, also, that she had crossed swords—as must be admitted was rather a habit—with Frohman. But he was well aware of her extraordinary beauty and charm. And we should be well aware by this time of all that

he was ready to do when even an acquaintance was ill. Like Shaw, he was troubled—as were many others—by what this illness must be costing; and about her future, if she recovered, for everyone knew how little she had ever planned or saved. Shaw tried to offer her money, and Barrie quite certainly had the thought in his mind. But no woman, again, ever suffered from more inflexible principles—in this sort of matter Mrs. Campbell had the conscience of the most obstinate and determined man—and nothing would induce her to accept. Yet the playwrights weren't beaten. There was something which, as playwrights, they could still do; and especially, as at last seemed possible, if time and the revival of her indomitable spirit should bring her back to health.

They would write plays for her. Or plays which were already in their minds should be hers and no one else's. Thus it was that Shaw promised her *Pygmalion*, and eventually let it go to a management who could pay her what she asked. While Barrie, knowing that this was the way to bring Frohman in on his side, instantly started turning his play about the murderess into a comedy in three acts. Or, in other words, the first act, which with an altered ending appears, as we said before, in his printed works as *Seven Women*, was kept as it was. But two more acts, showing the heroine's trial and acquittal at the old Bailey, were quickly added. There you were. All finished by February, and sent off to Frohman, who leapt at it as a vehicle for Miss Adams, and in his excitement was quite prepared to let bygones be bygones, and present Mrs. Campbell in it at the Duke of York's. A three-act play by Barrie. That was what he had been pining for all through his illness. Now that he'd got it, he almost felt his old self again. The luck was changing. The spell held him as firmly as ever. And yet, of course, he had been sent a most extraordinary kind of play.

Light and fanciful as it is, or fantastic, or, if you are in the wrong mood for it, not much short of absurd, the skill of the first act, in construction and dialogue, is about as first-class as it could be. Do you remember? A naval officer, arriving early at an old school-friend's house for dinner, is told by his host that seven women are expected. One with no humour, one with too much, a public speaker, a womanly woman, a mother, a coquette—and a murderess. This last, startling statement, though effective at the moment, leaves nothing but trouble for the playwright. Of course, as it is easy to guess, and a glance at the programme must reveal, all these women

are really the same one, and the host has been pulling his old friend's leg. Off he goes to change, a woman enters the drawing-room unannounced, and Captain Rattray is left to discover who she is. Try, if you have ambitions as a dramatist, to put this into dialogue, and then see where Barrie—in neatness, economy, and entertainment—has beaten you at every point.

Yet still there is the murderess. She had been travelling, with her little girl, in a train. The child had a cold. A man had refused to shut the window. So she opened the door and pushed him out.

A gasp here, certainly, or a snort, but hardly a laugh. Was this what Barrie really thought of a mother's love? Wasn't he pulling the audience's legs, too? Not a bit of it, or no sign or hint in this first version of the extraordinary play. Having laid his trap, it was as if he had fallen right into it himself. The other six facets were all swamped in the serious and preposterous trial scenes that followed. Having said that his heroine was a murderess, he must now take two acts, not to show that she wasn't, but to prove that her charm was capable of getting away, as they say, with murder. An outrageous story, even for a book; and still more outrageous in terms of the living stage. Yet Barrie had written it, Frohman believed in it, and no one could say that the same pair hadn't triumphed with the wildest improbabilities in the past. And the theatre, as all who live by it have learnt to boast, is a world where no one can really predict either failure or success.

As for Mrs. Campbell, she had never judged any play by commercial or any other ordinary standards. If she saw something there that appealed to her, this was all that mattered; and, besides, the spell was undoubtedly at work again when Barrie first read her *The Adored One*. When he did this, it *was* funny and charming that a mother should push a man out on to the line, and that the solemnity of a murder trial should be puckishly guyed. If reason a little later doubted, then who, with Mrs. Campbell's brains, could ever find a play that was either all beauty or all sense? There was enough of both in this case, and certainly enough oddness and queeriness, to keep her interested and amused. She had never shrunk from experiment. And what actress, after all, wouldn't star, if she could, for Barrie at the Duke of York's?

So she, too, as she slowly recovered, had hope if not confidence in *The Adored One*. Its production would wait for her, probably until the autumn, and *Pygmalion* must wait longer still. Mean-

while, G. B. S. would remain virtually and virtuously inseparable, and Barrie would still be in attendance often enough. But with far more moderation, because of all his other lives; and here, still in February, comes the blow to not the least of them, and to the whole, wide, awestruck world as well.

News, suddenly, from New Zealand, where the *Terra Nova* has returned. News, nearly a year after the tragedy, that Scott and his four heroic companions were dead. England and all admirers of courage and adventure mourned, but for once there were immediate and practical tributes as well. Scott had feared otherwise, but in this matter he could at last rest in peace. Not only was his widow granted the rank and precedence of the wife of a K.C.B., but government pensions were awarded to the heroes' dependents, and a Mansion House fund was opened and generously supported as well. England, in 1913, had time, inclination, and wealth for all this. The world wasn't yet satiated with gallant deaths.

Barrie, who had already contributed to the cost of the expedition, contributed again to the fund. And mourned, too, for the friend who had passed from his sight more than two and a half years ago, with a special sadness for that last and now pitiful little cloud. For nearly two months it haunted him, while the old sense of possession must almost be hidden when so far too widely shared. Then, on April 11th, Scott's letter—so well-known, though it has never been quoted in full—reached the Adelphi from those frozen wastes. In all its terrible simplicity it at once is Literature that puts all other literature to shame. And here, almost at the very end, are the sentences that destroyed not the memory but the last and faintest shadow of the cloud.

"As a dying man, my dear friend, be good to my wife and child. Give the boy a chance in life if the State won't do it. He ought to have good stuff in him." A gap, and then it goes on. "I never met a man in my life whom I admired and loved more than you, but I could never show you how much your friendship meant to me, for you had much to give and I nothing."

Inevitably, though the words have been printed again and again, there is a feeling of intrusion as we look at them once more. We see Barrie reading them, and we know that he sat down there and then to offer Lady Scott any and every assistance in his power. If he were overwhelmed— But of course he was overwhelmed; for his own letter is one of the shortest as well as the least literary that



he ever wrote. Never, even for him, had there been so prodigious and tremendous a compliment. He was humbled and uplifted by it; yet it was he—the sensitive, secretive abominator of all personal publicity—who let it appear, barely eighteen months later, in print. Why? Or which of the thousand Barries did that? Unanswerable, even though a flash shows the extraordinary involutions of his pride. Yet watch for the next time that he earns praise, and won't take it. Once more one can only record, and hardly hope to explain.

As for the prayer, it might, in some circumstances, have been a clear call to the man who had adopted five boys already to raise this number to six; and if Lady Scott had been totally different in every way, she could almost have been adopted too. But she was herself, and strong always and inflexible in character and courage. Also there was her pension and the Mansion House Fund. Also she was quite capable of earning her own living, in more than one career. And had dozens of admiring and devoted friends. So little Peter naturally remained Barrie's godson, and he and his mother have always a special place in the circle from now on. Their income, for some years, was certainly small; but either one can say that Barrie didn't force a gift that wasn't asked of him, or that he chose to continue his generosity elsewhere. To anyone who knows Lady Scott—or Lady Kennet, as we should now speak of her—all this may seem hardly worth mention. Yet for others the appeal and what has been said of Barrie's own character might easily suggest something else. It's accuracy that we're after; and justice, if possible to every one concerned.

At the end of this same month of April, 1913, Michael Davies—finished now with his years at Wilkinson's—entered Hugh Macnaghten's house at Eton. He would be the same age as the century in June, and whether from youth, sensibility, or the abrupt transference from a day-school, he was going to be lonely and unhappy in this first half. Soon, of course, he would be making friends, for it wasn't only in Barrie's imagination that he had looks, brains, and charm. Soon, also, he would be gaining more than his house-master's admiration. But the wrench was felt deeply in the Adelphi, too, for still none of the others could ever be quite like Michael. Of course he must go, and already there were ambitious dreams, not only for his school career. But there had been such

closeness of sympathy and understanding—closer, it may well have been, than between a real father and son—and now this one, also, must begin growing up. Rightly. It was part of the trust. And no school, of course, could ever be too good for Michael. But Barrie had to hold on pretty tight at first, not to go down there two or three times a week. Thus began the long, daily, term-time correspondence, which in itself is a tribute to both the man and the boy. This also must be remembered as everything else goes on. This very outstanding example of the kindness, and thoughtfulness, and pride. This very touching and secret part of the story.

And now, also, there was another secret in the background, though Barrie knew it, for it is never hidden as darkly as all that. Yet it is the rule or custom to treat it with profound reserve, and only on the eve of the announcement did he suggest to some of the boys that they should look in the morning paper. When they did so, it was of course no longer a secret at all. In the Birthday Honours List of June 14th his name appeared among the new baronets, which indicates—for even such mystical translations have a natural cause—that Mr. Asquith's recommendation and the King's pleasure had both contributed to this startling result. Startling, because his friends knew that he had declined a knighthood, almost everyone assumed that he would hide from public distinction as rigorously as from the public eye, and again because a literary baronetcy was something virtually unknown. Yet there was his name, officially gazetted. It seemed, then, that even in this matter he had contrived to be an exception to everyone else.

For the moment, too, he seemed almost unrecognisable. In America, it is true, he had been known and billed as James M. Barrie for years. But in England he had always been J. M. Barrie, and the name had been printed and spoken so often that it was almost a physical effort to change its rhythm now. What was one to call him? Not, save with the boldness of ignorance, Sir J. M. Barrie, though this, too, would be used for a long time in portions of the Press. No, somehow one had got to say and even to think of Sir James. Could one? Well, of course one could, sooner or later, for every month would make it easier, until finally it would be the old rhythm that sounded strange. Sir James Barrie, Bart. Try it on a congratulatory envelope—though strictly speaking, again, one should await the actual investiture—and then try reading it aloud.

Any easier yet? Not much. But of course it will be no use, in a week or two, writing or saying anything else.

Quite a number of old acquaintances, or younger friends, who had never called him "Jamie"—or "Jimmy," as it had become in England—found a refuge in addressing him verbally now as "J. M. B." There was a widespread outbreak of this. Some solved it with "J. M." But even the elder Davies boys were faced with the problem too. Michael and Nicholas were all right. They had drifted into "Uncle Jim" some time ago, naturally, comfortably, and flatteringly enough. But to George, Jack, and Peter he had always, from their earliest memories, been "Mr. Barrie." They were stumped. There was a brief experiment with "Sir Jas.," but it had two disadvantages. First one had to smile or laugh every time one said it, and secondly Barrie did neither. So, a little shame-facedly to start with, they too would change over to "Uncle Jim." If it were babyish, it was at least better than strangulated silence. Yet presently they got used to it, it was established, and the Fount of Honour had produced this strange but not wholly unsatisfactory result as well.

None of this, however, is to say that he didn't like being a baronet. He liked it enormously, and will go on liking it—which after all is very largely why honours of this nature are paid. Presently he will steal in and out of an investiture, pay dues to the College of Heralds, and be provided with both a coat of arms and a motto. *Amour de la Bonté*. Apt enough, and specially in the sense of kindness. And no particular reason, perhaps, why it shouldn't be in French.

His friends gave a dinner to him at once, at which he thanked them in an unrecorded speech. It seems doubtful if he explained the apparent change in his attitude towards titles, for which the only clue which he is ever known to have offered was that Sylvia Davies had once told him that a title might turn him into less of a recluse. Or so he said; yet though he still picked and chose, and hid from strangers, it was actually far from a solitary life that he was leading now. There was the family background at Campden Hill Square. There were frequent visitors, keeping him in touch with half-a-dozen different worlds, at the flat. And he was still steadily expanding his contacts with the big names in politics and any number of the more decorative names in society. A glimpse, from another biography, shows him this summer at a big dinner at the Duchess of Marlborough's. The list of addresses, at the end of the contemporary

note-book, gives no sign that he was avoiding people or personages like this.

Or he was off to Cambridge, to see George. Or down at Eton, seeing Peter and Michael. Or week-ending here and there, in houses where some members of the party would almost certainly be having their movements chronicled in the Press. More stamps now on still loftier ceilings. It was this summer, also, that the Galsworthys moved from Addison Road to the same street and block in the Adelphi, which meant more friends almost on his doorstep. And here was Frohman again.

Hobbling, so that it was an effort for him to walk even as far as from the Savoy. But still at the Savoy, from which no defeat or chain of defeats could have moved him; still a Napoleon, with plans for nine autumn productions in his American campaign And still hopeful and enthusiastic over his Barrie play for the Duke of York's. Or for his two Barrie plays, as had now been arranged, for the programme was to include, in a miniature three-act version, that old idea about three stages in a man's life as exemplified in the drafts of his will. *The Will*, in fact, which had refused all this time to grow to the full scale, in which compression had always triumphed over expansion, but which had now been finished, polished, and instantly accepted for both London and New York.

There might have been a third play, under the same management and in both countries, if compression hadn't again, for the author, become its absolute essence. *Half an Hour*. Finished and polished also, now. A taut essay in, for Barrie, almost impersonal melodrama, which Frohman begged him to lengthen—for there was certainly enough plot in it—but without avail. If he were writing plays now that were the wrong length for the commercial theatre, he was quite aware of it, but it just couldn't be helped. So as Frohman saw no prospect of fitting it into his now strictly limited plans for London, he could only let the English rights go. They were snapped up quickly, as we shall see in a moment; but first there must just be space for one more Frohman anecdote—some time at the beginning of this year's visit, which was also to be the last visit but one.

Frohman, at the end of the Easter holidays, at 23, Campden Hill Square. Deeply conscious of the honour, as it always seemed to him, of admission to this side of his hero's life. Frohman, who can hardly have met any other children, unless they were also actors, longing to please these special ones, and of course longing to please Barrie,

too. There was one gift, at any rate, in his power. Michael was reading an adventure-story of Rider Haggard's. C. F. borrowed it for a moment, and on the fly-leaf, with the blue pencil that he always used, scribbled a perpetual pass for two seats for the Duke of York's. What a gift indeed! What a picture of Michael and Nicholas presenting this volume at the box-office—as they did later on—and of Mr. Chcnery's face inside it as he recognised and honoured the unmistakable scrawl. Truly there were advantages in being a little Davies, when this sort of magic could be added to all the rest. Kind and ingenious Frohman. Yet in fact—for this must again be part of the sadness—there were barely two years, already, for the pass to run.

*Half an Hour.* It was de Courville, of course, on behalf of the big Variety firm of Moss Empires, who snapped this up for the Hippodrome, where the end of *Hullo, Ragtime!* was now in sight. Or perhaps didn't so much snap it up, though he was keen enough, as lay himself out to offer every conceivable kind of bait. Barrie shouldn't only have his own princely terms, and the production shouldn't only be regardless of expense, but he could choose his own cast—again without any limit to the cost—and Boucicault should be engaged to direct. The Hippodrome, it should be remembered again, wasn't only Moss Empires' principal shop-window, but could hold nearly fifteen hundred people, and with twelve weekly performances could afford, if all went well, an even greater outlay than this. Foreshadowings, therefore, of two sets of rehearsals in the coming weeks, in a theatre and a music-hall. And of more again, in this great period of Barrie in Variety, for at the end of July *Rosalind*—once more with Miss Vanbrugh in the title-rôle—was to start a four-weeks' season at the Coliseum. A boom, it seemed, was following on the baronetcy. You could hardly look at any column of theatrical notes now, without seeing Sir James Barrie's name.

The summer holiday plan this year was to rent another house in Scotland, where the boys could fish, and to travel pretty constantly and regularly to and fro. This meant that anything like Harris would be much too far away, and the house which was chosen was in Perthshire. Killiecrankie Cottage, it was called; quite a largish, stone-built house, in fact, though unquestionably overlooking the Pass. But before anyone left London, there took place, at the very end of July, something almost like a revival of the Allahakbarries.

E. V. Lucas's idea, it would seem. A match, between teams selected by Barrie and himself, at—of all places—his daughter's boarding-school at Downe, in Kent. So Gilmour was summoned, Will Meredith and his son, Maurice Hewlett, Harry Graham, and Walter Frith. A. A. Milne, Barrie's friend as well as Lucas's by now, who was still in his prime on *Punch*. From *Punch*, also, its artist, George Morrow. And George Davies, who would quite obviously bring victory to whichever side for which he played. The time and scene were still so Arcadian that it was a long journey, with a change on the way, from Charing Cross to Orpington, and a horse-brake still transported the players through narrow lanes to the school. Glorious summer weather. A ring of school-girls, on this last day of term, to watch, and wonder, perhaps, why some players seemed so skilful, while others had hurriedly to be told what "over" meant or shown how to hold a bat. Barrie wearing his old colours. The traditional group of grown-up female supporters. George Davies invincible in every capacity; yet somehow the game went on. Tea. The drawing of stumps. Back into the brake again. Back by the two steam-trains to London. And a little banquet in the Savoy Grill Room when all was over and done.

More cricket after this, of sorts, and always the closest interest in it until the end. But no more outings with the Allahakbarries. To-day—July 28th, 1913—was only, in fact, a shadow or echo of all that had been in the past. But Barrie and Gilmour, who had played together from the beginning, were both fifty-three. It had been fun making fools of one's friends before school-girls—though some had wandered away long before the end—but this time, said Fate, stumps must be drawn for good. Farewell, save for one more borrowing of their name, to the Allahakbarries. There was laughter in that last match, and superb exhibitions of incompetence; but henceforth there would only be memories in the summers that still remained.

Off, then—with some nights on the way at the hotel in Glen Clova, a few miles beyond Kirriemuir—to the house at Killiecrankie. Fishing, though again there was for this purpose regrettably fine weather; and cricket of a kind, though a good stroke sent the ball whirling into the depths of the ravine. But Boucicault was already rehearsing at the Duke of York's, and Barrie—who had already had the first of a long series of critical telegrams from Mrs. Campbell—was soon back at the flat. All the old faithful faces at the theatre; yet something less, perhaps, than the old discipline and calm. For

Mrs. Campbell could never be rehearsed by someone who led or even attempted to lead her by the arm. She jibbed, and Boucicault again assumed that dangerous look of a sleepy tortoise. Barrie was constantly having to make or keep the peace. And then, again, Boucicault had devised an exact and elaborate reproduction of the Old Bailey, but Mrs. Campbell said she couldn't play if she stood that way round. So the set had to be rebuilt. More expense, heavy enough already, with a star cast and a court-room full of supers. Complaints from Sir John Hare—who had been knighted and had retired from the stage since we last met him, but had now returned in an often very difficult frame of mind. Low growls from William Farren, in a minor rôle, but with so much theatrical tradition in his veins that he must always be making comparisons with the past. No trouble, one should add, from Godfrey Tearle as the hero, or from Eric Lewis as the Attorney-General. But one can't say that they weren't puzzled by that extraordinary trial scene. They were; and with all their experience of the mystery of rehearsals, they had never been more mystified than now.

Preparations for *The Will* at the same time—as the author still flits between London and Scotland—with more well-known names. O. B. Clarence, Sydney Valentine, Miss Helen Haye. This, apart from the quick changes in the wings, was completely plain sailing, and a relief, whenever its turn came round, to Boucicault too. But it was only the curtain-raiser. Everything, so far as a long run was concerned, depended on the main play. Doubts at the Duke of York's. No sign of doubt from Barrie, and we should know better than to look for it by now. But for once was even this incredible and legendary detachment to be taken as an augury of hope?

Thursday evening, September 4th. Exactly five years and one day since the historic opening, in this same theatre, of *What Every Woman Knows*, and an audience assembled for the first full-length Barrie play since then. Critics in their stalls. First-nighters in their finery. The author again behind his little curtain in Box F. *The Will* is all right. It's sad, and it's sardonic, and the audience would have preferred it to be neither; but it is superbly acted and no one can deny its more than remarkable skill. So the evening, too, is all right so far, and presently there is a salvo for Mrs. Campbell, and then gales of laughter for Tearle's story about the melon, and the neat, light-hearted first act of *The Adored One*, *A Legend of the Old Bailey*, ends with a rich outburst of applause.

Then, even in the interval, two things happen. No strike of stage-hands to-night, as eleven years ago in *Crichton*, but something almost as bad. The huge, heavy, built-up dome of the court scene jams somehow on the narrow stage, and as minute after minute goes by, the audience find more and more time in which to wonder if they really like jokes about murder. Their temperature drops, and though presently the curtain rises, and Hare, as the Judge, receives his own salvo, there is a dreadful deadness in the house. In the second interval, short as it is, there is a hushed and horrible silence. And as the curtain falls on the last act, something that has never happened to the author before. Not even at the first night of *Jane Annie* or *Josephine* had that sound come from the pit and gallery. The stalls are trying to drown it, but more as a class demonstration than from any enthusiasm of their own. The pink placard of *The Globe*—which ought to have been ashamed of itself, but was punished with the death-penalty, in another couple of years, for annoying Lord Kitchener—will put the catastrophe in two words. "Baronet Boood."

Such was the verdict on *The Adored One*; and Barrie, returning late to the flat after a desperate consultation with Boucicault, wasn't exactly comforted—though already he could hide his feelings—by a visit from Mrs. Campbell and some of his smart friends. But presently they left, and then and there he set himself to saving, for Frohman's sake, whatever could be saved. The second and third acts were now to be taken as a dream, with some nightmare electrical effects at the end, and a short scene was added to explain this, to show that in fact there had been no murder at all, and to bring the hero and heroine into each other's arms. More hurried rehearsals, and another first night of sorts; but it wasn't much use. *The Will* still couldn't carry what followed. Big names by themselves still couldn't fill the theatre. There was a limping, depressing run of just over ten weeks, and then both plays were withdrawn. Even Frohman couldn't order the box-office to fight any longer than that.

Failure, then—there was no other word for it this time—at the Duke of York's. But Barrie and Boucicault were already rehearsing at the Hippodrome. De Courville had been as good as his word, the main set for *Half an Hour*—Mr. Carson's mansion in Park Lane—was the extremity of size and elaboration, and there was a complete Barrie-and-Frohman cast. Headed by Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Edmund Gwenn, with the support of Sydney Valentine—who would



thus for some weeks be kept racing between this theatre and the Duke of York's. A *Peter Pan* pirate as the butler, just as two *Peter Pan* pirates had been solicitor's clerks in *The Will*. A complete transference, in other words, of all the old tradition to this larger and newer house. But not, of course, of its atmosphere. There were acrobats and singers at the Hippodrome. There was an immense, decorative, vacuous affair of girls marching up and down an enormous staircase. Sandwiched between these offerings, on the afternoon of Monday, September 29th, *Half an Hour* met a variety audience for the first time.

A few, here and there, were still puzzled, while others—who, after all, needn't have been there at all—seem to have resented any well-known dramatist appealing to them in such low company. But for all its swiftly-succeeding improbabilities, it was a fine, vigorous piece of construction, with fine and vigorous acting to match. A cruder and more melodramatic version of *The Twelve-Pound Look*, though with several inversions and a very different ending. More haste, yet anything but less speed. An admirable vehicle, always supposing that music-halls were meant for this kind of item at all, and the sort of reception which this time would make the box-office hum. Success, also, in the same week, for Miss Grace George, in Miss Vanbrugh's part, at the Lyceum in New York. Simultaneous success—though for other reasons neither run was a long one—for John Drew, at the Empire, in *The Will*. In London it seemed clear now that *Half an Hour*, whatever else accompanied it, would stay at the Hippodrome until the next big Christmas revue. Which it did, occupying twelve half-hours each week, and making it easier for the proud and philosophical Barrie to turn his thoughts from the disaster at the Duke of York's.

"Sir—I am writing to put before you the dismay of an old playgoer . . ." Yes, admittedly there was this kind of letter in *The Times*. But then there was a slashing retort from another old playgoer—not to mention, of course, a long communication from de Courville—and it all helped, for this autumn *Half an Hour* was news. Barrie himself was still silent and invisible, but he was still fascinated by the thought of experiment, and of escape from the long, slow drudgery of spreading a story and its characters over three acts. The music-hall, with its franker falsity, seemed at this phase to supply something that the theatre lacked. And it was just about this time—but we must never forget the other sides, for it also dates

the beginning of his long friendship with Miss Florence Dugdale, who would next year become the second Mrs. Hardy—that he slipped into a seat at the Palace, and instantly detected genius in Mlle. Gaby Deslys.

This wasn't her real name, of course—it would be amusing, if there were only space and time, to give the real names of all his stars—but it was exquisitely descriptive. The small, vital creature, in her immense bird-of-paradise head-dresses, with her electrifying expressions and movements, and the almost open legend of her unfettered private life, stood for all the naughtiness and Frenchness, the gaiety and gaminerie, of Paris. This was her stock-in-trade, and with it she had subjugated not only her own boulevards, but America and now London as well. She was Gaby to the public, however they pronounced it. She, too, was news, in the Press and by word of mouth, though it would have been difficult for either to exaggerate the truth. She was also—to the confusion of the Auld Licht standpoint—one of the kindest and most generous women on the face of the earth. Stage-hands, who so often see only the reverse side of stage-glamour, worshipped and adored her. Her art? Just being Mlle. Gaby Deslys. She couldn't sing. She didn't pretend to act. Her dancing was merely provocative extravagance, and even her dresses were but the same extravagance designed by someone else. But she was packing her goggle-eyed admirers into the Palace now, with an almost utterly meaningless miniature revue. And Barrie, watching her also, decided that he had made another discovery.

Hardly as a pioneer this time. It wasn't like the case of Miss Ethel Irving in the Notting Hill *Babes in the Wood*. But there must always be an individuality of perception, and he insisted on seeing far more than others could see. Moreover, cumulative fame and mystery, a superstition stronger than even *The Adored One* could shake, had placed him in an almost unique position. He was like royalty in the theatre. He knew it. Sometimes, or often enough, he would affect an incognito, or would fail to recognise an actor with too familiar an eye. But the spell and the sunshine were still up his sleeve, for use whenever required. From one side of a cigar he could still issue regal and irresistible commands. So he asked or commanded Alfred Butt—still managing the Palace—to effect an introduction. He entered the star dressing-room, and told Mlle. Deslys—dashingly and, one may be sure, with full relish on his own

part—that he would give her a chinchilla coat. Shades of Nottingham. Do you remember the shy young journalist who took an actress for a drive in a victoria? Did Barrie remember him, and had this sort of offer been his ambition all along?

Perhaps. Or partly. Even Mlle. Deslys, however, who must certainly have dealt with many such offers before, was a little puzzled at first. Her strange visitor then withdrew, though not before he had arranged for Butt to bring her to lunch at the flat; and here, at their next meeting, he announced that he had changed his mind. There should be no chinchilla coat as yet—though if there wasn't one later, there were plenty of other gifts—but he would write a sketch for her instead. So he did—that's to say, if it wasn't lurking in his desk already—and it was immediately, though once more anonymously, incorporated in her hotchpotch at the Palace. Something, so far as is remembered now, about a man offering her love instead of wealth—with special and subtle implications of course, in this particular case. It got its laughs, and stayed in the bill; but Barrie, rehearsing again, and revelling in this new and surprising conjunction of personalities—for what other leading playwright or member of the Academic Committee could possibly find himself working and playing with Mlle. Deslys?—became determined to provide her with a full-length revue.

He told her—no doubt with some more magic here—and she at once fell in with the plan. One can't read her mind; one can only guess, and pretty hopelessly, at what she thought a revue by Barrie would be like. But all contracts and arrangements must be cleared out of the way, so that she, Gaby Deslys, might be the latest Barrie star. Fantastic magic if you like, but such, now, was their power over each other. She thrilled, trilled, and was as keen as mustard. Barrie, again immensely secretive and possessive—yet dropping a few hints which of course, as they always do in the theatre, ran like quicksilver all round the astonished profession—flung himself into a spate of ideas. Of extraordinary ideas, for it seemed that there were no rules or restrictions any more. There should be music, bits of film, tricks, booby-traps, and every kind of reckless absurdity. The note-book this autumn appears almost to have taken leave of its senses.

Here is the beginning of it, or the first framework, extracted from a welter of illegibility. With an indication, also, that he had hoped at the outset to secure Frank Tinney—the American black-faced

comedian, who had also had a huge success at the Palace—as the masculine lead. “Tinney. Gaby. Ordinary play with chorus. Marriage of chorus girl and lord. They love but she is miserable because doesn’t know what she wants (really wants chorus &c.)—she goes off. Last scene—back again & happy, because she has chorus &c.” But this, whatever you may think of it, is comparatively simple and straightforward compared with the notes that follow. It also, as a beginning and ending, remained more or less intact; but between these two points he wandered wildly and wherever he chose. Perhaps there was restlessness here. Or perhaps there was more unhappiness—that of one who feels disgust and contempt for his own gifts. Yet there was tremendous and incessant impetus. A mischievous and uncontrollable spirit had taken hold of him and was guiding his pen. It wouldn’t listen to reason, but he couldn’t help admiring it. It was at least, and for the time being, reviving that old, watchful, and appreciative interest in himself.

This, then, was his work at the flat—varied, it would seem from the note-book, with another revival of that old idea for a book about a schoolboy. Still to be called “Secundus”; but Michael was the model now, with little or no disguise. There is a whole page, suddenly and perhaps rather touchingly, giving a glossary of Eton slang. And then this, also, drifted and drooped and broke off.

Yet there were new books, in a sense, this autumn. The limited, Kirriemuir Edition (Hodder and Stoughton), in ten volumes, of all the old titles from the beginning up to *Peter and Wendy*. In November the illustrated edition of *Quality Street*—the first play to receive his official *imprimatur*, and special, re-written stage directions—with decorations and coloured plates by Hugh Thomson. And an expensive, limited edition of this, too. At the end of the month, by the way, this same play was revived at the Duke of York’s, with Godfrey Tearle and Miss Cathleen Nesbitt, in place of *The Adored One*. In December there was a Barrie preface to a new illustrated edition of Ballantyne’s *Coral Island*. And so it all still went on.

Christmas approaching, with more coughs and colds, but for the fifth time this season he was watching his own rehearsals, as Boucicault drilled Tearle in the part of Captain Hook, and a new Slightly in the shape of a fourteen-year-old boy called Noël Coward. But *Quality Street* was still to be played in the evenings, and to some addicts and enthusiasts there was something a little ominous in the

relegation, for the first time, of *Peter Pan* to matinées. For some could never quite agree that it was only a children's play.

One more memory, before the year closes. Of Barrie's enthusiasm, which in such cases always involved proselytism, for D. H. Lawrence's novel, *Sons and Lovers*. No praise was too high for it, and no friend must escape reading it. There was much, one might have thought, to offend him; but there was a mother in it—the right sort of mother—and he had a nose like a bloodhound for style. Preparations, then, beginning with a generous letter, to draw Lawrence into the circle too. As it might have been, in earlier days, to make him an Allahakbarrie. But the plumed serpent was sullen and shy; was abroad also, at the moment; and when a meeting took place, a year or two later, one can't say that it was a success. One can even say that the odds were about a hundred to one against its being anything of the sort. Yet many-sided Barrie—writing his revue, rehearsing his plays, dining with his duchesses, and looking after his five boys—still had a finger on the pulse of literature; and a much more sensitive and catholic finger than the accepted legend would suggest.

End, then, of this rather strange and patchy, though crowded and active year. The baronetcy—as perhaps always happens—had at the same time served to crystallise his standing and to make it more vulnerable to attack. For the public, whether consciously or not, felt that the honour was partly its gift, and that the recipient had become partly its property. There was pride in this feeling, but until they got used to it there was greater watchfulness, and not even the elusive Barrie could avoid that. His main play had failed, but he was still, quite obviously, a powerful though unpredictable force in the theatre. Was he a Great Man, then? The English still had a rough and ready rule for this; that no one could really be a great man until he was more than middle-aged. They watched the candidates, and didn't invariably discourage them, but the real test must remain the test of time. If you passed that, as well as the minor tests, you were all right; you were theirs, and they were yours. By the end of 1913, however, they still hadn't spoken with that one, deep, and unmistakable voice. There was still more than a possibility, especially if they were confused by too many experiments, that they might never approve this ultimate title at all. It depended. It depended, in fact, though they didn't know it, on the whole trend of history in the next five, fatal years. Meanwhile, at the end of this

particular year, uncertain and unequal as it had been, the candidate can at least be said to have satisfied one of their unspoken demands. From tours, revivals, music-halls, amateur actors, investments, and the new and old versions of his books, his income had risen again to somewhere about forty-five thousand pounds.

1914. Charles Frohman presented Miss Maude Adams in *The Legend of Leonora*—to which name *The Adored One* had now reverted—at the Empire Theatre in New York on Monday, January 5th; and for Miss Adams at any rate, it was another triumph. The second or dream version was used, and whether because this smoothed over the chief difficulty, or because the New York critics and playgoers wished to demonstrate their superior sense of humour, it was hailed with loud laughter and delight. Only to be regarded, said the critics, as a vehicle; yet it is quite possible that a small, roguish, elfin Leonora might provide more mirth and entertainment, while New Yorkers neither knew nor cared whether British justice were administered in this extraordinary manner or not. It ran for the best part of four months—which broke no records, but was anything but a failure on Broadway—and later Miss Adams added it to her extensive Barrie repertory. But of course it still remained a very queer sort of play.

January 12th. Revival of *The Will* at the Palace. January 25th. Revival of *Half an Hour*, with Miss Blanche Bates this time, at the Vaudeville Theatre in New York. Still no shortage, in other words, of Barrie offerings in both countries but he himself spent most of this month in a third. Another Swiss holiday—yes, the new life had gone even this far, in less than five years, towards healing the old wounds—with the Davies boys, and Brown the butler, at Mürren. George twenty-and-a-half. Little Nicholas over ten. But Michael still and always the special companion, in Switzerland or anywhere else. Unspoilt by it—but a bunch of brothers can help here. Malleable, but already less malleable than you might suppose. Character here; so much that even Barrie couldn't always bend it. Yet just as in Kensington Gardens he had glowed, secretly, at George's thoughtless rebuffs, so now it was a source of pride to him when Michael couldn't be charmed. This strength, it seemed, was something that he needed, and against it he deliberately held back some of his own. For Michael was to have the biggest future of all of them. And already he relied so much on his instinct and judgment, that an idea

put before Michael, which didn't gain his approval, would in all probability be dropped. Though of course he described them, even to Michael, as cunningly as he could.

All back to England by the end of the month. The boys to Cambridge, Eton, and Wilkinson's, and Barrie again at his desk. Long before that illustrated edition of *Quality Street* both Hodder and Stoughton and Charles Scribner had been anxious to publish the plays, but with little encouragement from the author. Plays, he had felt, were plays, they were meant for the theatre, and existing typescripts or prompt copies were in no sort of condition to appear in print. But the work on *Quality Street* had shown him something. That it was rather fun to take the old dialogue and brief directions, to polish the former—for with a pen in his hand he never really tired of that—and to turn the latter into a new form of expression. To expand them. To add pictures, as it were, by forewords or italicised paragraphs in brackets, that should bring both scenes and characters to the reader's eye. A new game, with new scope for ingenuity. The author as showman as well as playwright. So now he was experimenting, with some of the shorter pieces, and presently there would be galleys and page-proofs again.

Yet all the time there were notes, notes and still more notes for the so-called revue. Plans and inquiries about using the cinematograph. A notion for incorporating some kind of ballet. Scenes, here, there, and everywhere, crowding the little pages. And ever now, as he paced his study and glanced across Robert Street, a fixed preoccupation with the author on the other side. He had put him into a revue of sorts once already, but now he had become an obsession. More shafts, friendly or mocking, at G. B. S. "Get Shaw's views about bringing up children." "What is Shaw doing?" "Irish question settled by Repertory." "Shaw disguised as redskin." And so on, with an undercurrent of Granville Barker, again and again. He was never so much of an Adelphian himself that he couldn't still stand aside and see the joints through which an arrow might go. He was Puck, and the others, in this mood, were the rude mechanicals. With Shaw as Bottom the Weaver? Not quite, for it was the wit and cleverness across the street there that constantly teased his mind. Was he cleverer, or wasn't he? The thought suddenly came to him of getting Shaw, and perhaps some of those other, elusive ninepins, to act for him in a film. To put the film into the revue. And to exhibit them, as he had once exhibited other authors

on the cricket field, with all their dignity removed. Yes, this was the sort of idea that he had in the spring of 1914.

But the Irish question wasn't settled by Repertory, of course, nor indeed by anything else. In March, to the strange delight of some of the Opposition, and most encouragingly to the nation that was the recognised enemy overseas, there was either a mutiny at the Curragh or an amazing interpretation of the military oath. The Liberals called it mutiny, and Barrie still saw everything in politics through Liberal eyes. "I feel like pulling down my blinds," he wrote, in one of his letters to Miss Herbert. "Home Rule or not becomes a very little thing, and so does what party is in power and whether troops were sent judiciously or not to Ulster; but officers allowed to bargain—we have suddenly ceased to live in a free land and are a shame to all who have struggled in the past to make it free. . . . I hope the rank and file will shake the House to its foundations to-night."

Honourable indignation, even though there are two sides to everything, and men, subsequently esteemed, would stick to it always that the officers and not the Government were defending freedom. Now, after all these years, we look back at the Curragh and see it as hardly more than an inevitable detail in the general drift towards catastrophe. But prophets weren't honoured in the spring of 1914—some of them, indeed, would only claim to have been prophets when the page had turned—and there were clouds, but barely one in a thousand could see what lay beyond. War, it was felt, was always possible in the Balkans, and uneasy stories had been coming from Germany for months. But surely, when the Kaiser was the King's cousin, and when the great powers had managed to avoid an outbreak so long, surely this was only the old business of a boggy, as it had been in the past. Eyes on Ireland, then, or anywhere but on the brink of the pit. It couldn't, wouldn't, and mustn't happen. For tens of thousands again it was hardly even a nightmare, because it was so impossible and remote.

Frohman was over again in April, still hobbling on his stick. His last visit; and a last visit also, with Barrie, George, Peter, and Michael, to the Meurice in Paris. Plays and sight-seeing again. Long discussions at midnight on fresh theatrical plans. Talk of the still largely inchoate revue, with much laughter at its oddness and ingenuity, and still the confidence that whatever Barrie wanted must be right. A play might have been better, and another play for Miss Adams



better still, but at least there was to be a full evening's entertainment, so of course it must go to the Duke of York's. Expensive? Never mind about that. If Barrie was determined to experiment, Frohman was with him and behind him still. In fact, such were the author's interest and enthusiasm, he was prepared to do a good deal of the backing himself. That, however, could be settled later. Now what other stories had he got to tell?

The scene changes to London, and the boys again vanish, but Frohman and Barrie still sit talking, at the flat, and upstairs or downstairs at the Savoy. Mason, Lucas, Barker, Shaw—who has had a tremendous success with *Pygmalion* and Mrs. Campbell at His Majesty's—all dropping in and talking too. And another gradual development, in the shape of Elizabeth Lucas, with typewriter, as the nearest thing to a secretary that Barrie has ever had yet. She sorts out some of the chaos, and understands, and helps. It had been a boast and a principle, for many years now, that he could never put up with this kind of assistance; with an implication that those who did so were only aiming at effect. Indeed, he has written hundreds and thousands of letters which he could have avoided, and has omitted to deal with almost as many which have then either answered or not answered themselves. This, if you can give it such a name, has always been the system; yet suddenly it is permissible to have a secretary, so long as she isn't really a secretary at all. So a friend's wife taps away and shows him some of the advantages that he has missed. He will miss her, too, when she is no longer able to be there. And this—but undoubtedly there was something else in both cases—will pave the way, eventually, for the mysterious C. Greene.

There was work enough in the flat this June, not only in attending to letters and discovering, if possible, which fragment of manuscript or typescript should really be fastened to which, but in the organisation of an enormous and, at the time, significant supper-party to take place at the beginning of July. The Cinema Supper; that was what it was called. Invitations issued to about a hundred and fifty guests, almost all on the stage or in society, to repair to the Savoy Theatre on Friday, July 3rd. Here a banquet would be served—described as Act I on the programme—and an entertainment would follow. *Frank Tinney's Revue*; consisting of Frank himself ("Hello, Frank!" "Hello, Ernest!"), and a whole series of all-star sketches by J. M. B.. Miss Marie Löhr and Dion Boucicault in

*Why? A Conundrum.* Miss Lillah McCarthy and Henry Ainley in *One Night*. Miss Jean Aylwin, with Edmund Gwenn and Henry Vibart, in *When the Kye Came Home*. Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Godfrey Tearle in *Taming a Tiger*. Interpolation at this point, in her own material, of the lovely and gifted Miss Ina Claire. Gerald du Maurier and Granville Barker in *The Bulldog Breed*. To conclude—and what can Frohman, who was also present, have thought of this joke?—with “still another version of *The Adored One*,” in which the players were Miss Marie Tempest, with O. P. Heggie and Graham Browne.

Even in that legendary, luxurious season this was a startling and outstanding affair. Look at those names. Consider the limited and exclusive company of guests, which was headed—and five days after the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Serajevo—by the Prime Minister and Mrs. Asquith, and from which hundreds of jealous and baffled snobs and notabilities were shut out. What on earth was Barrie up to? Why on earth had he suddenly assumed the mantle of Lucullus and the Medicis, or of the wife of an American millionaire? You may well ask, just as you may well gasp at the six sketches which he threw off or threw out for this one, astonishing evening. Yet there was a reason of sorts. Self-expression, for one thing. The wish to surprise himself and everyone else by beating all rivals at yet another game. And the calculated, extraordinary scheme of stationing men with movie-cameras to film the guests as they arrived or ate and drank. For it was Barrie's fantastic intention to employ shots from the Cinema Supper as introduction to a scene in his revue.

But of course he never did. The film was taken, and he and a few intimates saw it run off. But by this time the intention was known, and it can't be said that it was particularly well received. If this was what a Cinema Supper meant, the guests felt they should have been warned. A letter arrived from 10, Downing Street, pointing out that the Prime Minister had attended what he had taken to be a private party. It was quite clear that he now regarded his host's ingenuity as anything but a joke. And even for Barrie, or Puck, or whatever we are to call him, that appeared to be the end of that.

However, he hadn't finished with filming. The very day after the party he was down in Hertfordshire, with his technicians, with Barker as joint-director, and with a cast consisting of Lord Howard de Walden, G.B.S., G. K. Chesterton, and William Archer. H. G.

Wells and Maurice Baring had also been invited, but one was too suspicious and the other too busy to attend. Cowboy suits had been provided, and were produced from a beer-barrel. The company put them on, and ran about, and leapt, as they were ordered. Chesterton was set to cross a stream in a boat, swamped it, and—still as a cowboy—waded ashore. The spell, it seems obvious, was working overtime on that crazy and remarkable day.

But again nothing came of it all. A copy of the film still exists; but Shaw, it would seem, had qualms as the magic dried off. He made more inquiries and discovered not only that it was all meant to be shown in public, but that it was also part of a proposed burlesque in which an actor was again to impersonate himself. He sat down at his typewriter, and for once both Barrie and his joke collapsed. Perhaps—who knows?—the joke would have collapsed anyhow, for expensive as it had all been, this was only one of the extravagances that were whirling in and out of Barrie the revue-maker's mind. Some kind of infection, in these last months of peace, from the world-wide confusion that lay ahead? This isn't a Barrie that we easily recognise, as he plans these reckless concoctions between the future and the past. They won't stop altogether, though, in the years that are to come. Often enough the same sort of impulse—that old irritation with the theatre that he loved—will drive him for a while into strange by-ways. It isn't often, after all, that there will be anyone or anything to stop him. But in 1914 his theatrical ballast seems suddenly to have shifted or even to have been dumped overboard. No doubt he is still seeking something, as he always will be, but with a very queer compass and chart. Fifty-four. Perhaps that has something to do with it. Or perhaps, again, it is the shadow that he feels but still can't see. Whatever is happening, he isn't the only one who will be conscious afterwards that strange forces and spirits were abroad in July, 1914.

Yet still, whether quiescent or active, there are all the other Barries there too. One of them has again taken a house in Scotland—Auch Lodge, Bridge of Orchy, Argyllshire—for the boys' summer holiday. Another has been supplied with material by Lady Scott for the pious but onerous task—at any rate, he felt extraordinarily diffident about it—of providing an introduction to Turley Smith's forthcoming book, which is in the main to be a boys' book, on her husband's voyages. To a third, and to one who goes back to the very beginning, there came, on July 16th, sad though not altogether unexpected

news from the north. The "much-loved brother," Alexander Ogilvy Barrie, who had been failing, unmistakably, for a long while, had died, at the age of seventy-two, at his home in Kirriemuir. A release; yet also a reminder. Of Glasgow. Of Dumfries. Of all the help and shared ambition. Of his visits to London, so big, and bearded, and strong. Then of his retirement, his patience and courage, and more help now from the one who had been helped. Of all that unquestioning loyalty, and devotion, and pride. Now they, and Alick, had gone. Another pilgrimage across the Gairie burn, and along the road past the Tenements, to a graveside on this Hill. A mourner there who would see to it that the widow and her children could still call Strath View their home. Memories, though, to take back to London, and more responsibility as well.

July ending. The volume of little plays—*Pantaloon*, *The Twelve-Pound Look*, *Rosalind*, and *The Will*—passed finally now for the press. Last engagements with old and new friends. A late evening—it must have been July 29th—at Maurice Baring's, and a walk afterwards, in the small hours, as far as the door of 11, Downing Street, with Lloyd George. And then, on the next day, off with the boys to Scotland. "Nicholas," he writes to Lord Lucas, on July 31st, "is riding about on an absurdly fat pony which necessitates his legs being at right angles to his body. The others are fishing. The waters are all a-crawl with salmon, but they will look at nothing till the rain comes. . . . The really big event is that Johnny Mackay (Michael's gillie) has a new set of artificial teeth, which was the one grand topic of conversation in Auch. He wears them and joins in the talk with a simple dignity, not boastful, but aware that he is the owner of a good thing—rather like the lady who passes round her necklace."

No mention of any other big events. They came so swiftly at the end, so startlingly, and so unbelievably even to awed watchers far nearer all the centres of the storm, that in Auch Lodge—where morning papers only occasionally arrived on the date of issue, and where there was no other source of outside news—the fate of the world was still unguessed and unknown. It seems to have been Lord Esher, with whom there was a meeting a day or two later, who first spoke of countries already at war. Even on August 4th Barrie was writing anxiously, but with no real knowledge of its imminence for Great Britain as well.

And so the irrevocable hours went past; for the time was ripe, and all destinies—however cruel, however pointless, however

glorious, ironic, or terrible—must be fulfilled. The news reached Auch—for ill news travels fast—by the following day. We know now that it was the end of a world which can never return again.

## 20

The rains broke on the west coast of Scotland, and there would be fine fishing when the first floods had passed; but Barrie, with George and Peter, had come south at once—where one golden day succeeded another—for these two boys would go straight into the Special Reserve at Sheerness. Jack, like the rest of the navy, was somewhere unknown. Only Michael and Nicholas, with the faithful Mary Hodgson, were left in the holiday house.

One remembers the high hopes and confused eagerness which accompanied the bewilderment and horror of those early days. Everyone must obviously do something, as the voices of various authorities flickered between Business as Usual and a powerful antistrophe. There was mystery and there were rumours. Yet in London, apart from the newspaper placards and headlines, the increase of khaki, and the occasional sight of recruits marching along in their ordinary clothes, there was still very little visible change. No sudden restrictions that affected the normal conditions of life. If civilisation, as we now know, had been holed below the water-line, there was still a vast impetus, stored up from the years that had vanished, to keep it drifting on its course. Even the experts didn't really know what a European war was like, in August of 1914.

Barrie, who was certainly anything but this sort of expert, reacted for once with the crowd. He didn't doubt that the right decision had been taken. He wanted to do something. But it wasn't at all clear to him what, at his age, he could do. On the day that it all started Lord Lucas had offered his big Bedfordshire house—Wrest Park, near Amptill—for use as a hospital; the offer was accepted; and, as a close friend, Barrie was already aware of the arrangement and making ready to help. But at the moment this was more a moral than a practical outlet, and having failed to discover any other immediate task to be undertaken, he was back in Scotland by the middle of the month.

Not for long, though. The hub was calling, George and Peter were naturally and constantly on his mind, and suddenly there was

a summons from the theatre as well. In the general uncertainty—which developed, in fact, into the biggest of all theatrical booms—Frohman had decided on a revival of *The Little Minister* at the Duke of York's. The first, in London, since the curtain had fallen at the Haymarket in October, '98. So Barrie was in the stalls again, with more memories as he watched the new cast. Headed this time by Donald Calthrop and Miss Marie Löhr. And directed, of course, by Boucicault.

On the day of the dress rehearsal, however—September 2nd—there was another summons to obey. It came indirectly from the Cabinet, and directly from the Rt. Hon. C. F. G. Masterman—as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, though he was now in the strange and uncomfortable position of lacking a constituency—who had bidden a number of distinguished authors to his office in Buckingham Gate. So Barrie was there, and Hardy, and Galsworthy, and H. G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett, and Masfield, and Robert Bridges, and a whole lot more. The plan was that they were to be organised for the literary dissemination of the British point of view. It was just a little, perhaps, like summoning the witch-doctors to cast their spells, and though they were all patriots, there was hardly one of them who could be expected to produce propaganda without a strong personal touch. War, in other words, can organise, or dis-organise, a great deal. But the pen will always remain lighter, and far less amenable to discipline, than the sword.

There were odd results as the authors dispersed. Some just gave the whole thing up at once, knowing how little use they could really be. Others took immense pains, and sacrificed income, to produce material which no one then wanted to read. Others, again, were quite unable to stick to their brief, yet naturally resented criticism from officials and outsiders. Masterman, already worried by his own political future, must often have felt still more anxious as he saw what his efforts to bridle the Muses had done. No wonder the Government sought other methods of influencing opinion as the war went on.

Yet one author had discovered his duty and function, and they lay, it appeared, in the United States. Or two authors, for Mason as well as Barrie had now promised to go there at once. Their position was mysterious and anomalous. The utmost secrecy must attend their departure, and what exactly they were going to do when they got there, neither as yet quite knew. Somehow they were to

state the British case, and Barrie certainly saw more coming from it than this. He felt he was representing the Government, that he and Mason were to be secret agents, that once more he was a power behind the scenes, and he didn't entirely disregard the possibility of bringing America in on the Allies' side.

However, he told Gilmour, who happened to be dining with him, and Gilmour—whose career had now long since taken him away from journalism and the Bar into the City—suggested that he should come too. No objection from the Duchy of Lancaster. The mission, as they now thought of it, was still further reinforced by Brown. Strings had to be pulled to secure a passage, for Americans were still crowding every West-bound boat; but they were pulled to such effect that the children's play-room on the *Lusitania* was fitted up with extra berths, and the party embarked at Liverpool on September 12th.

Still so surreptitiously—though by this time quite a number of friends were at least aware of their departure and destination—that their names were kept out of the passenger-list. It would appear, also, that they had all been too busy on the date of sailing to read the current issue of the *Morning Post*. But others had. Half-way across the Atlantic they were taking tea with an American lady, when she suddenly revealed that the cat was completely out of the bag. Leakage. How or where could only be suspected. But the whole spirit of the adventure had changed.

At Quarantine, shortly before midnight on September 17th, it became clear that the leakage wasn't confined to England. Barrie received two letters, one from the Consul-General in New York, on behalf of the British Ambassador at Washington, and one from Maurice Low—Sidney Low's brother, who was Washington correspondent to the *Morning Post*—which informed him, officially and unofficially, that in the present state of American neutrality any idea of a mission must be abandoned at once. It could only embarrass the authorities, would be bound to provoke counter-demonstrations, and had indeed already been the subject of attacks in the pro-German Press. Masterman's secret instructions counted for nothing. And here came the reporters. What was the disillusioned little party to say?

There was a hasty consultation, and Barrie stepped forward. He said—for there was now no other answer to their questions—that he had come here on a private visit, with a couple of old personal

friends, simply in fulfilment of a long-standing promise to Charles Frohman and Miss Maude Adams. And in fact this had already become the truth. They reached the Plaza Hotel, where they had booked rooms, at about three o'clock in the morning. The so-called mission was already at an end. That evening, in the most convincing manner possible, they all dined with Frohman at the Knickerbocker, attended a performance of *The Girl from Utah*, and went on with him to the Biltmore roof.

The next day Gilmour set off for Washington, in a last but foredoomed attempt to change the Ambassador's mind, and when he returned he found that Barrie and Mason had moved to the Knickerbocker too. He still had hopes, and still for a while went about seeing influential people, for he could at least supply Masterman with a report. But Barrie had accepted the decision, and wouldn't try again. He was spending nearly all his time with Frohman. He was meeting Charles Scribner, and other old and new friends. He was going to plays and films, and to a film-studio with Frohman's brother Daniel. He was making the best, and it wasn't a bad best, of this unexpected return, after eighteen years, to the always fascinating and stimulating New York.

As for Mason, he, too, had seen that the original game was up, and after a short visit to Canada he returned to England by himself, where he obtained a commission, and set off—though he was much nearer fifty than forty—on mysterious and gallant adventures which he has always been too modest to record. But Barrie and Gilmour still stayed on, being entertained, and in Barrie's case providing entertainment by writing an alleged interview with Brown, which appeared in the *New York Times* on October 1st. Fragments of it may also be found in *The Greenwood Hat*.

He spent a week-end with Frohman at White Plains. He accompanied him to Atlantic City to see Miss Adams in *The Legend of Leonora*—the first and last sight of her in one of his own plays. He went up the Woolworth Building. He lunched with ex-President Roosevelt again at Oyster Bay. And there were other lunches and dinners, as on the previous visit, with authors and journalists at their clubs. But there was no real reason to remain much longer, and of course there was a special home-sickness, with the papers full of war news all the time. Gilmour had kept himself busy, for he had any number of interests and connections—including the handling of his friend's film rights, though between



the two of them they certainly became entangled in the most extraordinary mess—but he, also, was getting anxious to be home. A last evening, then, for Barrie and Frohman at yet another theatre—the last evening of all—while Gilmour wrote final letters and Brown packed; and so back to the Cunard pier. Frohman had said good-bye at the hotel. It was a lieutenant—Alf Hayman, who subsequently took over his business—who actually saw the travellers off. On the *Lusitania* again, which sailed—a much emptier vessel this time—in the small hours of Wednesday, October 14th. They had been in America just under four weeks, and they were both in London again by the following Monday night.

Where Barrie was immediately laid low with the first of his autumn colds, so that he couldn't even attend Miss Chase's wedding, at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on October 24th, though she came in—looking very unlike Peter Pan now—to let him see her wedding-dress. Then she became Mrs. Drummond, with a husband at the Front, and presently he would be godfather to her eldest child as well. A couple of days later, far away in Hamilton, Ontario, Miss Adams gave the first performance of another one-act play. The old idea, which he had toyed with for years—and at first, again, had thought to make into a full-length play—of the inverted *Taming of the Shrew*. Petruchio, though he didn't know it, was Katharina's butt. Words almost entirely by the original author. Interpretations, action, and twisting of the situations by Barrie. *The Ladies' Shakespeare* it was still called, and again it flitted in and out of Miss Adams's repertory, either as a curtain-raiser or after-piece, for quite a while. Research, however, has so far failed to reveal that it was ever performed in England.

Meanwhile—though work still went on, and there was an idea for yet another short play, on the war, as well as fresh thoughts for the revue—there were changes and developments at Wrest Park. Quickly prepared as a hospital in August, it had then, by a sudden decision of the hard-pressed authorities, been turned into a convalescent home. For a month it had housed the earlier casualties from the London Hospital, who were now on the road to recovery; one of whom, as would later be reflected in *A Kiss for Cinderella*, had concealed a fishing-rod—Lord Lucas had supplied a dozen, but they all wanted them—in his bed. Early in October the last men were fit enough to leave, and the wards were temporarily closed. Shortly afterwards, however, the authorities had another idea, which

was to use it as a hospital after all. The organisation, with Miss Herbert's outstanding energy and vitality behind it, sprang to life again; and Barrie, who from the beginning had considered himself specially concerned with it, sent a cheque for a thousand pounds.

And didn't stop at that, either, as from the latter part of November the convoys began to arrive. He was down there constantly, soothing the inevitable friction among the staff, and playing with or arranging games and amusements for the men. He gave richly, with more than money, to Wrest Park Hospital, as long as it was there to be helped. He loved it, and felt rightly enough not only that it partly belonged to him, but that it was unlike any other war hospital on earth. Those Saturday shoots for the doctors, with nurses and convalescents as beaters. The billiard-tournaments. The fishing. The unusual entertainments. The intense personal interest of Lord Lucas and his sister in everyone under their charge. All these were just as they should be for Barrie to feel interest and enthusiasm too. These Herberts always drew the best from him, and nothing much better than this has yet been known.

Early in December there are two more publications to be noted. The volume of one-act plays, under the title *Half Hours*, which did a good deal to bring in more amateur fees. And a companion to last year's *Quality Street*, in an illustrated edition—illustrations again by Hugh Thomson—of *The Admirable Crichton*. Now, also, the first little war play was ready, and four days before Christmas it was presented, with Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Norman McKinnel in the two leading parts, at the Coliseum. *Der Tag*. Everyone knew what that meant in December, 1914. It was the toast, they had been informed again and again, of the German army and navy. What the play meant, however, was considerably more obscure. McKinnel was described as the Emperor, and he certainly seemed to be a German emperor; but was he or wasn't he the Kaiser? He didn't look like him, and was much more sympathetically treated than, at the moment, was at all to the public taste. Miss Vanbrugh, as the Spirit of Culture, admittedly gave him some hard knocks, and concluded by inviting him to commit suicide. A good idea, thought the audience; but then this part of the play was a dream. Barrie full of feeling which he couldn't quite express. Barrie's patriotism, already and always, a bit too subtle and broad-minded—shall we say?—for the music-halls. And to tell the truth, it was all rather dull. A misfire, it would seem. "We venture to think," wrote the faithful

Walkley, "that the popularity of *Der Tag* will be greatest in the study." Well, it was published, in the same month, in both England and America, and included, five years later, in a new edition of *Half Hours*. But it isn't in the big, definitive volume of 1928. Perhaps by that time even the author felt that it had better join the ghosts.

On Boxing Day *Peter Pan* was revived again, just across the street, with Miss Madge Titheradge as the new Peter, and the one and only Miss Trevelyan back in her own old rôle. George Llewelyn Davies was in France now, in the fourth Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. Peter was still at Sheerness, preparing to follow him. Jack was still at sea. Only Michael and Nicholas for the first, war-time Christmas and New Year. Thoughts and memories. Hopes and fears. And so, as the darkness still gathered, into 1915.

Still the constant visits to Wrest, where constant disputes, one is afraid, among the staff were forcing Miss Herbert to take over the post of Matron herself. And still at work on the revue. It was getting into shape now, or at least it was being reduced in length and size. Mlle. Deslys was back in London, at the house that she had taken in Kensington Gore, and production had been set down for some time in March. Meanwhile, though the films of the cowboys and of that party last July had both been scrapped, Barrie was still determined to make use of the screen. So again there were days in the country, with his technical assistants, while the cameras got to work. On odd and extravagant fancies; though somehow, as others have discovered, this can never be the real medium for the spirit of impromptu and surprise.

Then there was to be music; by John Crook, of *Peter Pan*, by Herman Darewski—who composed for about twenty revues during the war alone—and with a couple of interpolated numbers, taken from one of Frohman's American musical comedies, by the still comparatively unknown Jerome D. Kern. E. V. Lucas, again disguised as F. W. Mark, had been writing the lyrics. And Boucicault, of course, was to produce.

That was a mistake, perhaps, though if so it wasn't the first or last. The revue was, inevitably, quite unlike any other revue; yet it constantly employed the technique, and this was the one thing in the theatre that Boucicault had never learnt. There was heaviness, at those rehearsals, where there ought to have been lightness; or a thoroughness that was now quite out of place. Not nearly enough

champagne, or even sparkling muscatel, to carry the thing along. The cast again, though headed by two experts in seemingly careless froth—for Jack Norworth, another American comedian, was now playing opposite the star—then tailed off, for this strange and particular purpose, into far too many members who had learnt how to act. This gift wasn't needed, or at any rate should have been quelled rather than painstakingly brought out. But Boucicault had only one method, and Barrie couldn't alter it now. More very queer, yet already baffling and discouraging, rehearsals at the Duke of York's.

No trouble with the star herself. Much of the material can have meant little or nothing to her, but she worked like a nigger—there was no other resemblance—at everything she was told. Again she was immensely popular with everyone in the theatre. The closest, if most surprising, friendship sprang up between her and Miss Mabel Lillies. Barrie must still overlook an important and even more generous rival, but he had his thrills both on and off the stage; and of course she was flattered, for he put all his skill into that. Here was, or should have been, the fulfilment not only of his promises of eighteen months ago, but of a much older dream. To have the fluffiest, fairest, and most feminine of all actresses, and one who stood for these qualities all over the world, awaiting his words of command. And again, if this were what he wanted, and if Frohman were prepared to help him, perhaps he had earned his wish. Yet it was March, 1915. You couldn't keep the war out of anything. It was a band round one's head, a load on one's heart, it was there when one awoke in the morning, and still there night after night. It seeped into the theatre; not only by permission—for there were war references and a whole war scene in the revue, as well as rehearsals now for a curtain-raiser about the war and nothing else—but whether it were wanted or not. It hung like a cloud over all the intended lightness and gaiety. There was no roaring comedian, no noisy production-number to drive it off. Something wrong, then? They were all beginning to feel this, for all the ingenuity and hard work. And then the war struck again.

Twice in just under a week. Death in action of Lt-Col. Guy du Maurier; Sylvia and Gerald's brother, the boys' uncle, the author—six years now since the secret and the excitement—of *An Englishman's Home*. Then came the other telegram, this time for Barrie himself. Death, in another part of the long, murderous line, of

Second-Lieutenant George Llewelyn Davies; Sylvia's first-born, who should still, but for this horror, have been laughing among his friends at Cambridge. "The most gallant of you all."

There is an entry in a note-book, many years later, in which Barrie records how each year since her own death, and on the date of her birthday, he wrote a letter to Sylvia Davies, giving an account of his stewardship, telling her how the boys were shaping, and what they had done. But after that day in March of this year, he says, he never wrote again. He couldn't. He knew that the war must go on now, that lives must be sacrificed, that all the solemn declarations must be backed by young human blood. It seemed, as it must always seem to men in war-time, a dreadful and inescapable truth. Yet he had promised to look after Sylvia's five sons; and now one of them was dead. Therefore—never mind about the reason, or any other attempted consolation—it had been his own fault. He sat alone or paced up and down in the flat. He did everything that he could, in tenderness and gentleness, for the other four. The faithful friends showed ample courage in doing all they were allowed. But again something had died in him, too. So much still lived—for he was still Barrie—that we may be amazed at how soon the story seems to go on. Yet there was an emptiness that could never be filled. A haunting, unceasing reproach, in the midst of his pride, to deepen the lines which time and his load of sorrow had already carved so deep.

He kept away from the last rehearsals at the Duke of York's, and when *Rosy Rapture*, *The Pride of the Beauty Chorus*, was produced, on March 22nd, no author was even glimpsed in his box. The curtain-raiser—*The New Word*, which echoes a scene from *Little Mary*, and may be found in the collected plays—was a strange preparation for the main part of the bill. It is Barrie being remarkably sentimental, of course; it was most skilfully calculated to produce the maximum of discomfort among real parents of soldier sons; and he can hardly have written anything in which dialogue so consistently dispenses with action. But it never falters in ultimate sincerity. He meant what he was saying this time, and, however he said it, with all his heart. Admirable performances by a quartette consisting of O. B. Clarence and Miss Helen Haye as the father and mother, and Miss Gertrude Lang and Geoffrey Wilmer as the daughter and son. This was the kind of thing that Boucicault could take care of better than anyone on earth. The audience sighed,

laughed, gulped, were a little puzzled, perhaps, by this kind of introduction to a revue; but sat back, in the first interval, full of hope.

Then, unfortunately, they were puzzled still more. They didn't boo this time. They laughed, in fact, at some fragments of burlesque and whenever else there was a chance. They joined, to the best of their ability, in a tongue-twisting song with Jack Norworth. They were full—or most of them were—of a desperate kind of loyalty to Mlle. Gaby Deslys. But though her dresses were as fantastic and outrageous as ever, though she danced deliriously, and flashed what Walkley described as her "rather sick smile," her contributions to the dialogue were often extraordinarily difficult to understand. The spectacle of actors like Eric Lewis or Leon Quartermaine in this sort of medley was decidedly disconcerting. So was the discovery that, ten years after *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*, Barrie was still flogging the eternal triangle—as if it hadn't been rather a battered target even then. Already, also, a London audience had fixed ideas of what was and wasn't a revue, and there was just enough of the former to flummox them afresh each time the thing seemed to drift and then linger elsewhere. They left the theatre quietly and in good order; but there could be no doubt already that *Rosy Rapture's* principal and outstanding distinction was that it was a war-time revue that had failed. It was true that Nico Davies, aged eleven and a half, would consider it the most glittering and fascinating entertainment that he had ever seen in his life. But it would take more than this very exceptional opinion to alter the verdict now.

Thus again, and for the second time running, the old and as it had once seemed almost fool-proof conjunction of Barrie and Frohman and the Duke of York's had resulted in a public rebuff. But again the author wouldn't yield without a struggle. He was back in the theatre almost at once, for more rehearsals, and cuts, and alterations, and always with the feeling that something could still be saved if only the right changes could be made. And the returns weren't exactly disastrous, though still there were always empty seats. Curiosity still kept the box-office at least alive, and so far as Frohman's share was concerned, he was still prepared to go on. But the figures weren't improving.

Then, because it was the younger boys' holiday-time again, he took them away with him; to Lord Lucas's house in Hampshire, where he was in bed again with a chill, and on for a while to the

sea. But by the end of April their schools had reopened, and he was back at the flat. Rattled, though, by disputes now in the theatre as well as by the state of the booking. Frohman was expected in a few weeks anyhow, but more and more he was feeling that only Frohman could put things right. For he had a special flair for patching this kind of entertainment, for detecting and dealing with flaws, and he would soon bring peace behind the scenes. So one evening Barrie drafted a cable, begging him to come over at once, and E. V. Lucas took it away with him and sent it off.

One can't and mustn't say that this alone decided the date when he sailed. He had been coming in any case, and so often he had put off or put forward his personal plans. But he told a lieutenant that he had a definite engagement with Barrie, at the old and immutable table in the Savoy Grill-Room, for the night of his arrival, and Fate, it may be, had an ear for that. The New York newspapers had been full of warnings, from German sources, that passengers for England would now travel at their own risk; but Frohman wasn't afraid. He made a joke at the last moment, with his famous blue pencil; sketching a liner and a submarine, and marking the submarine "I.O.U. boat." "That's the only U-boat," he said, "that will ever get me."

Thus, with an author again for company—poor Justus Miles Forman—he embarked on the *Lusitania* on Saturday, May 1st. The friends who came to see them off saw also that the vessel was so crowded with extra life-boats that the upper decks were jammed. It was a grim departure, but Frohman was still smiling when the friends left him, as he stood there leaning heavily on his stick. He kept mostly to his cabin after that, for his knee was pretty painful, and he always had scripts to read and work to do wherever he went. It was a slow voyage, for these were no times for records, and though there were as yet no convoys, there were special and cautious orders from the Admiralty. It was a full six days before they sighted the south-west coast of Ireland.

Then, at half-past two on May 7th, to the eternal discredit of the human race, two torpedoes were fired from a German submarine lurking off the Old Head of Kinsale. The *Lusitania* heeled over at once. There was no chance to shift all those extra life-boats. Her end had come. In barely twenty minutes the great ship had plunged to her own death, and of the just over eighteen hundred persons on board only just over six hundred were saved.

A hundred and twenty-four American citizens had been killed or

drowned, and in the end that country would see to it that they were avenged. But Charles Frohman was among them.

His body was recovered the next day, and brought, with many others, to Queenstown—or, as it has since called itself, Cobh. The coffin was taken back to America, where memorial services were held not only in a big synagogue in New York, but in many other towns, from coast to coast, where the Frohman stars were still playing. In London there was a service at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. And presently there would be two other English memorials as well. A drinking-fountain, at his favourite Marlow, paid for by members of the profession which would never see his like again. And a plaque by his table in the Savoy Grill-Room, which was Barrie's suggestion, and is also there to this day.

Though he would never sit here again, either, nor order his extraordinary meals, his name still headed the placards and programmes at the Duke of York's, and even the daily announcements in the Press. *Charles Frohman presents Rosy Rapture*, by J. M. Barrie. But not for much longer. The heart had gone out of the whole thing now, and business was no better than before. On May 29th, less than nine weeks after the opening performances, it was played for the last time. The company was disbanded. The stage was cleared. Mlle. Deslys returned to her previous orbit, but her own life was now well past its early meridian. She died, after a long, painful illness—still in the aura of bygone hearsay, yet still worshipped by hundreds for her unceasing generosity—in less than five more years. But there will be no sign of her in this story again.

Barrie's first tribute to Frohman was an article which appeared in the *Daily Mail* of May 10th—*Charles Frohman, an Appreciation*—and subsequently as the foreword to his biography. "The man who never broke his word," is its opening sentence, and the whole portrait is one to honour his memory, as it praises "his humour and charity and gentle chivalry, and his most romantic mind." Indeed, these words had been earned, and indeed there was a gap now that never could be filled. Nineteen and a half years since that first meeting in New York. Sixteen years of the closest co-operation, and of far more than that, from the man whom the cruelty and futility of warfare had snatched away. A very great influence, as we have seen, through all that period in his friend's career. Now the friend was left with more memories, and there was another ghost in the



Adelphi and at the Savoy. A tremendous light and flame had been extinguished, and all who knew Barrie must think of him as they, too, shuddered at the disaster or mourned their own friends. But it wasn't easy to offer sympathy; for with Barrie it was never easy to do that.

He seemed to retire still further into himself, yet withdrawal, one felt, was no real defence. Did one know what he was thinking? No, never; that was part of the difficulty again. An agonised reaching out across the gulf, in a welter, one might almost say, of sorrow and pity; yet Barrie smoked and was silent, or would only talk of something else. Still, though, there were strength and resilience, and Barries to exhibit both. The sudden ending, and the long list of agreements which had never been put on paper, left extraordinary confusion behind. In America a Charles Frohman Company, headed by Alf Hayman, set to work to carry on. The tours continued, and a dozen New York productions—already planned—went forward under the old name. But the case was altered. Barrie's personal interest now was no longer in the management, but only in his various stars. He had to fight for them as well as for himself to retain what had once been unquestioned control. Much tiring and difficult correspondence, for many weeks and months, before the position was again satisfactorily clear. But he got his own way in the end, for when it came to an emergency, or when something really mattered, his Scotch blood produced a powerful business sense. Behind the sadness and silence he didn't mean—and why should he?—to lose any of his complicated rights.

In London the situation was simpler, for there he was, with Golding Bright to help him, on the spot. Everything reverted to him here, and these two, whether it should be a case of a revival or a new play, could make their own arrangements. But no new play had now got further than the notes and half-sheets of paper, so there was no urgency yet. The entries that survive from this summer are almost all repetitions or variations of a list stretching back for years. Some would go further, and some wouldn't. Effort of this kind so often seemed petty and pointless against the vast background of the war. A different mood still waited within him for the spring to be released. But for a while it was all left to take its own chance, or for the pen, as it were, to make the first move. He was absorbed in other responsibilities just now.

At the end of May the Liberal Government, assailed by powerful

forces, and loudly blamed for the position in Gallipoli and for a general shortage of munitions, gave place to a Coalition. Asquith was still Prime Minister. But Lord Lucas, though thirty-nine years old now, and technically a cripple, retired from his parliamentary secretaryship and joined the Royal Flying Corps. This was a sign for Barrie to give more thought and time than ever to the hospital at Wrest, but in the same month he became closely connected with another and a very different kind of hospital as well.

Stories of conditions in the war-stricken parts of France, particularly as affecting French children, had been haunting his mind for months. He discussed them with Elizabeth Lucas, saw, no doubt, the strength of her sympathy, and asked her if she would go out there and prepare, at his own expense, some kind of organised refuge or home. She hardly hesitated. With E.V. and a letter from Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassador—and a first cheque from Barrie for two thousand pounds—she left for Paris at once. At the Embassy they were referred to the Society of Friends, the only civilian body that the French authorities would allow near their lines, and at their headquarters there was immediate gratitude and help. It was arranged that a large château at Bettancourt, near Révigny—which the Germans had occupied in their first rush—should be lent as a clearing-house and temporary hospital for the children of Rheims and its neighbourhood.

The place was empty, except for quantities of dirty straw which the invaders had left behind; the grounds were neglected; the garden was without flowers; the only water supply was from a neighbouring spring. The Lucases cleared the premises and obtained the minimum of necessary equipment almost entirely by themselves. The first patients arrived—a woman with a baby in arms. Then a few others were brought in, and later about a dozen children whose homes were under bombardment. These were the first inmates, still terrified by the sound of guns, the sight of aeroplanes, and fears for the parents whom they had left behind; and a number of them had been wounded. Then, as E.V. returned, and with the help only of a matron, a nurse, of Turley Smith as a kind of orderly, and a group of more or less untrained girls who came out from England, Elizabeth Lucas managed to take in more and more of these pitiful victims, until presently there would be as many as sixty under the roof.

This—but one seen who more than shared the honour—was

Barrie's secret gift, though only one of them, to those who suffered in the war. The two thousand pounds were only the beginning of it, for he paid for everything throughout. He sent hampers of provisions from London, and even a cask of whisky—for goods consigned to the Quakers were excused customs formalities. He provided a car; essential for obtaining supplies. He gave another two hundred pounds to be spent on cigarettes for the French troops, who often filled the stables and outbuildings on their way towards or back from the Front. And at the end of July he paid a visit to Bettancourt himself.

But while the guns thumped, the château windows rattled, and the war-planes roared overhead, and while Elizabeth Lucas was still organising in the midst of danger and chaos, there are still two glimpses of him in England. In June he spent a week with the Welsh Lewises, with Peter—on short leave—as the other guest. Golf-croquet again, and the kind, friendly family to applaud the particular prowess of his favourite yellow ball. While in July there was another incursion not only into secret politics, but into the very highest kind of finance. This was Gilmour's idea, it would seem, though a letter in *The Times* had set him off. The suggestion that War Loan should somehow be made available to the very small investor, who at that time was unable to contribute at all. So there were talks with Barrie, and Barrie would write a letter to the Prime Minister—which he did—and it was referred to the Treasury, and in the following February the great scheme of War Savings Certificates was introduced, which would grow to such enormous proportions as time went by. Again one can't pretend that this was all Barrie's doing, or even Gilmour's. Nor can one possibly allege that the former had suddenly turned into an expert on the national exchequer. But he did write that letter at an important and critical moment, and of course he liked to think—as who wouldn't?—that it hadn't been written in vain.

So then, armed with a pass, for some reason, from Scotland Yard, he set off, at the end of the month, for the Château de Bettancourt, and spent the best part of a week there, seeing what Elizabeth Lucas and his cheques had done. He liked this. He liked being allowed where others were forbidden, he liked the sense of adventure, and of course he liked tackling the children with strong doses of charm. Afterwards, perhaps—when, for instance, he spoke of this hospital at a function in Edinburgh in 1932—it might seem to him that the

children had been even more accommodating, and the charm even more irresistible, than was actually the case; since language, for one thing, was a very considerable bar. But that isn't cheapening his kindness, nor the pleasure which it brought him to be able to help in this way. And if there were pleasure, also, in keeping so very quiet about it for all those many years, then that is a side of the Barrie sensibility which one is bound to love and admire.

From Bettancourt he went on, with E.V., to Paris, and spent a night or two at the Meurice—seeing about more supplies, and wasting hours, of course, over the weary, war-time business of passports. Then it was the end of term again for Michael and Nicholas, and having collected them in London, he took them up for another holiday in the north. No furnished house this year for the much-diminished party. An hotel at Glengarry, in Inverness-shire, for two or three weeks, and then on to another hotel at Kimelford, near Oban. There was fishing for the two boys, while Barrie followed them with their coats and the ginger-beer, but what struck them all was the grim emptiness of the deserted glens—signs of war, now, in Scotland as well.

Yet the pen was itching, in this solitary land, and the playwright was again at work. The old notion of a Cinderella story had returned, and was growing day by day. The war, it seemed, couldn't possibly be kept out of it, and was already colouring every scene. A policeman hero, on the look-out for uncurtained windows and spies. A heroine with her own little crèche for refugee children as well. Little extracts from the other hospital at Wrest. War-time language. And strange, war-time dreams. The queerest, perhaps, of all the plays, but one gift had returned at the very outset. No chance of getting all these thoughts and material into one act. *A Kiss for Cinderella* must quite clearly be allowed to stretch again and spread.

They were back in London a week before Eton resumed, and Barrie was again at Wrest. Lord Lucas's swift proficiency in the Flying Corps would obviously be taking him abroad before long, but the incessant problems of running so large a hospital had never grown less. At first he had thought of handing them over to a committee; but committees, no less than doctors and nurses, were notorious for argument, and more and more he felt that ultimate authority must be in the hands of one man. He put what now seemed far the best suggestion to Barrie, and Barrie accepted at once. He proved the greatest possible success at the task, bringing to it

endless patience, and wisdom, and tact—as well, a little later on, as Gilmour in the guise of an accountant. So Wrest was now more his own hospital than ever, as he helped Miss Herbert and everyone else, and as her brother went off with his squadron to Egypt. But still there was Bettancourt; and, if it comes to that, a constant and generous interest in other hospitals as well. This isn't, quite clearly, the Barrie of those last months before the war. Or shouldn't one say that, when of course the qualities had been waiting there all the time?

A bit of the old impudence and impertinence came out, on November 19th, at a *matinée* at His Majesty's Theatre in aid of the Australian wounded. *The Fatal Typist*, by J. M. Barrie. Another of the jokes—but of course it helped to sell the tickets—which seemed mostly at the audience's expense. He hadn't finished with them, either, though playlets for charity *matinées* are obviously and always in a class by themselves, and it is the thought, as they say, of other gifts, that counts. He wasn't afraid, at any rate, of being ephemeral or undignified in a good cause. Or, as there is always another angle on everything, he still wasn't tired of almost any excuse for attending more rehearsals.

London getting darker than ever, and colder, in this second war winter. A blaze, in its west end, of commercialised gaiety for subalterns, but a heavy weight on all those who were less obviously doomed and young. How long? What next? The same questions always waiting, every day and every night; but still no answer to them; only rumours, and hopes, and fears. Air-raids. Maroons. Take cover. All—for the time being—clear. These had become part of the London background since the summer. Zeppelins were as yet the menace or danger; the first Gothas had still come no nearer than the coast; but from the Adelphi Barrie had already seen the searchlights on one of those little silver cigars, and the glow from fires and explosions only a little further east. Two raids in September. Another in the middle of October, with the bombs nearer still. Then a pause; but they were only beginning. He treated them rather as he treated the traffic; very much, that is to say, as something that hardly concerned him. Yet he had an eye for another aspect. "I watched the Zeppelin from my window," says a letter to Lord Lucas, "and could not help thinking as the guns were plugging away at it that exciting as life was for the moment down below how wonderful it must be to those in the Zeppelin."

Bed and bronchitis again after that matinée; the usual and inevitable two or three weeks. And then, once more, to the annual rehearsals of *Peter Pan*. Its twelfth year, but now, for the first time, no longer at the Duke of York's; because there was no Frohman. Boucicault, rallying his forces after fourteen years of that wonderful and trusted regency, was entering on management himself, at the New Theatre, a little way up the same street. So *Peter Pan* should be his, and Peter, this Christmas, was to be Miss Unity More. All the old thoroughness and care for every detail; and yet there was a difference, not only in the shape and size of the stage, and in a decision to drop the Lagoon scene until times improved. The other old feeling that, whatever happened, Frohman would always take and welcome the ultimate risk had gone now for good. If the dresses and scenery were getting a little shabby after all this time, Boucicault couldn't risk everything in repairs and repainting, for the season was short, and there were other plays in his plans. The beginning of a long, courageous struggle in what would presently be more and more difficult days, and always with memories of the glorious, golden age. And Barrie, one must admit, increasingly critical, as he, too, remembered how it had all been in the past. Or perhaps as his mind again harked back to *The Wedding Guest*. Poor Boucicault. . . .

Jack Davies reappeared, on leave, for Christmas. Peter, still only eighteen, was now taking drafts out to France, but would return without them for a little longer. Michael and Nicholas were again at Campden Hill Square. Barrie arranged a special Christmas entertainment for the soldiers at Wrest, and a Grand Billiard Competition with prizes. But on his own Christmas evening he was alone. Something had brought him to the flat, but the Browns were away, and he had to light his own fire—accomplished by using Mrs. Brown's shopping-basket as kindling—to cook his own dinner, and make his own bed. All, it may have been, in accord with his mood, for he was alone there again on New Year's Eve. Yet these are always moments for looking forward and back, and if he had chosen the loneliness, he couldn't avoid the sadness that came with it, whether he gazed at the dying year or the one that lay ahead.

1916. Off, on January 1st, with Michael and Nicholas—Jack having now gone to friends elsewhere—for a night or two with E. V. Lucas at his new house near Petworth, and on again for another week by the sea. Then back—but for Barrie it had been a working holiday—

to more work at the flat. Two new ideas for the charity matinées, one involving the cinema again, had come rushing forward, and there were last touches to the Cinderella play. It had its title now, and Boucicault, who had heard of it, might naturally have hoped that the New Theatre and his own management would provide its first home. But if he did, he was disappointed. Barrie had been thinking, and listening, and weighing things up, and certainly there were grounds for preferring an established management to one that was still on trial. There was also another and still stronger personal link with the one that he had in mind. Five years now since Gerald du Maurier had left Frohman and set up with Frank Curzon at Wyndham's, but already there was a tradition there, and one of very considerable success. Not to be compared with the Frohman tradition, in lavishness or extravagance; but that had gone anyhow, and Wyndham's in these days was as near as any London theatre to the next best thing.

So Gerald read *A Kiss for Cinderella*, and more than once, one may imagine, gave his short, shrugging laugh. He didn't like whimsy or nonsense—he never had, and he never would—and there were lines and scenes here that smacked of anything but cold roast beef. But of course he saw the other qualities, and of course he wasn't going to let it go. He was going to argue and fight over several sources of embarrassment, and in fact prove a good deal more obstinate than Boucicault, under Frohman, had ever been. His production should most positively involve this kind of collaboration. But a new, full-length Barrie play, with this strange yet topical atmosphere, couldn't possibly be allowed to go elsewhere. His partner, though no visionary either, entirely agreed with him. So that was settled, except for the cuts and alterations that he was quite determined to secure. Gerald was going to be Barrie's new star, manager, and producer. Boucicault must drop out of it this time, though the link wasn't broken, and would serve both their purposes more than once again. It was Barrie, also, who put him on to A. A. Milne, and thereby presented him with the biggest success of his independent career. And of course, as they all knew, there are expedencies in the theatre.

Another bit of impudence again. March 7th; special matinée at the Coliseum, in aid of the Y.M.C.A. concerts for the troops. All-star ballet, musical comedy, and variety programme, and, as has been announced more than once, Sir James Barrie's "surprise." In

this mood he has contributed inspired, and misleading, paragraphs to several parts of the Press; concluding with the statement in the most appropriate column that *The Real Thing At Last*, as the surprise is now called, "has its inception in the romantic attachment long felt by this author for the dramatic critic of *The Times*." But what has he really been up to? Why, he has collected an all-star cast of his own, from the legitimate and lighter stage, and has had them photographed in a burlesque, modern, motion-picture version of *Macbeth*. To the tinkling piano accompaniment of those days their shadows tore the tragedy to ribbons. With copious sub-titles by J. M. B. "The elegant home of the Macbeths is no longer a happy one." "Those Macbeths—" with a shot showing Duncan—"I don't trust them." "Macbeth receives a disquieting letter." And at the end, after a terrific fight all over the castle in more than Wild West style: "The Macbeths repent and all ends happily."

As all ended happily on that March afternoon, with a large cheque for the Y.M.C.A. And Barrie had enjoyed himself. He'd had glorious fun at the studio, he'd pulled at least a couple of thousand legs at the Coliseum—not to mention the legs of all other film-directors—and he didn't care twopence whether he had been dignified or not. He was above all that; outside it, and beyond it. The stage and the screen were his playthings. And again there was the double, quiet joke of mocking both stars and audience with the same bit of fun.

But the main job was at Wyndham's now, where Gerald had been applying his own methods to the three-act play. A very skilful antagonist and ally. The light, youthful laugh to disguise the most obdurate tenacity. The feint, or strategic retreat, which he didn't quite trouble to hide. Sympathy and a cold douche both ready on the point of his rapier. And Barrie, never really deceived by a single gambit, employing every subtle defence and attack of his own. Yet it all led to considerable adjustment, and Gerald's touch would unquestionably leave its mark. Still there was secret envy on both sides, coupled with the clearest vision of each other's weaknesses or faults. But from such ingredients *A Kiss for Cinderella* took much of its ultimate vitality. One might count it lucky for both sides that they so often rubbed each other the wrong as well as the right way.

Miss Hilda Trevelyan—as there can be no need to remind anyone who saw her—was again a Barrie heroine as the humble Cinderella.



O. B. Clarence, who sometimes seemed almost like a Barrie character in other plays now, was the artist who employed her. Miss Henrietta Watson was the stern and practical woman doctor. And here, also, was A. E. George again—from *The Wedding Guest*—as Danny, the wounded soldier, who owed so much to a certain Paddy (his more official name was Private Kidney) in the early days at Wrest. Twenty-four years now since Toole and *Walker, London*. Not only a new generation in front, but one which remembered the long list of successes, and the two failures which had come at the end. At the rise of the curtain some must have noticed how much simpler was the setting than anything that would have been thought good enough for the Duke of York's; and perhaps—for some again—there were other reminders that this was more than an ordinary first night. A new theatrical alliance. A fresh start, perhaps. An indication, in another hour or so, as to whether Barrie were going forward, or standing still, or slipping back. Then, in another moment, they had recognised and applauded their beloved Gerald—though with a slight start or tightening of the scalp as they saw his policeman's uniform; and after that, of course, nine-tenths of them were completely carried away, while the remainder could only feel that the blindness or deafness must somehow be their own fault.

*A Kiss for Cinderella* doesn't compromise with sentiment. It's drenched in it from beginning to end. It was drenched in the war-time background, too—which, as one reads it now, seems, comparatively speaking, such a cosy and almost fragrant affair. But its test, of course—war or no war—was whether the knitting together of all these fancies would or could reach out over the footlights; and particularly, when the time came, whether the audience would be caught up in the dream. In fact, it wasn't even a case of touch-and-go. The minority might wriggle gently in their seats, but the majority were powerless under this intensive exhibition of cunning and skill. Barrie himself would say afterwards that the dream ball-room was the best scene that he ever wrote, and not only to-night, but for another hundred and fifty-five performances, its magic, and kindness, and friendly satire went straight to the public heart. Always, of course, with the exceptions; but for the rest with that very personal appeal to something in themselves of which they had been hardly conscious an hour ago, but which they now instantly recognised and had only, it seemed, been waiting to express. This was the trick, if there was one. And whether, to-day, a critic will

feel inclined to agree with the author or not, there can at any rate be no more concentrated essence of Barrie than in that entirely inimitable second act.

Then came the last act, bursting with Barrie-isms too, but inevitably suggesting reaction. Kept going with as much art and artfulness as ever, and rising at last, with deliberate delay, to the longed-for and essential kiss. A happy ending? The audience never questioned it, and perhaps weren't meant to question it, though the printed text—which appeared nearly six years later—leaves a sudden and cruel doubt. That, it may have been, was a dark afterthought, which in fact no actor or acting could hope to reveal. But at Wyndham's, at the end of that first night in March, 1916, the audience took their own view of the matter, and applauded, more than happily, again and again. Success. And farewell to the memory of the failures. Barrie, in his own time and in his own curious, confident, and cunning manner, had done it again.

This would never be a favourite choice for subalterns on leave, though, as usual, the oddest characters would suddenly fall flat under the spell. It drew largely on older playgoers—with crowded matinées full of gently gulping women—and broke no Barrie records with its run of nineteen weeks. But it had its addicts, immediately and throughout, for where it hit the mark it stuck and clung, and there were two Christmas revivals, at other London theatres, during the war; almost, while that lasted, as if it were another *Peter Pan*. Then, in December of 1918, who wanted to be reminded of air-raids, and hospitals, and refugees? Abruptly it dated, and there must be a pause now, for perspective, before it returned again. Then it was history as well as fantasy, as though something had been twisted round. Yet it was history in two senses. A war-dream that was now part of the war itself; and for all its strangeness and marked idiosyncrasy one of the closest portraits of England in 1916.

Meanwhile, in the year in question, Barrie could once more hide his pleasure instead of his disappointment, and drop into a theatre where there were no doubts or false hopes. And not only were there children here to fascinate and amuse, but—another essential ingredient—a collection of seven of the loveliest young women on the stage. The Beauts, who had been chosen, indeed, for this quality and no other, and by a du Maurier, which is as much as to say by an expert in good looks. Barrie, accordingly, with a trace of the

Grand Turk at times, gazing at this seraglio or throwing off a careless reference to it elsewhere. An irresistible impersonation which somehow, through worry and preoccupation with the principal, he had missed at the Duke of York's last year. The goddesses towered over him, as he flattered them and as each dreamt of becoming a star. No, he hadn't exactly put in their parts for this purpose, but he fully appreciated the result. Barrie and the Beauts, at Wyndham's in war-time. They had to come into our own portrait of the period, too.

Perhaps it was the spring, or the Press notices, or the fact that Peter was in London for a signalling course, but suddenly he—and others also, for their own reasons—felt a wave of hope about the war. Gallipoli—evacuated in January—had in a sense been written off. Russia was still in the field, and expected to move forward. The German attacks at Verdun and on the Meuse seemed now as if they were being held. No air-raiders had yet reached London this year. The enemy, so readily and eagerly assumed to be desperate, were thought to be contemplating a last throw, and Wrest had been warned to prepare for the effects of an invasion. But surely this meant that the stalemate was nearing an end, and surely it could only end in one way. So it seemed, and not only to Barrie, as the days lengthened and the sunshine grew warmer again. Even the highest authorities, in the spring of 1916, could hardly have believed that two-thirds of the fifty-one months of war were still to come.

So Barrie threw off another trifle, for another charity matinée, this time for the war work of the Y.W.C.A. and at Drury Lane. *Shakespeare's Legacy*, suggested by the tercentenary year, and starring Gerald du Maurier and Miss Lily Elsie. A war-time bride revealed not only the secret of her charm, which proved to consist of unselfishness, but also the hitherto unsuspected fact that Shakespeare had been Scotch. On April 13th—after some more rehearsals at which the author had made the fascinating and equally unsuspected discovery that Miss Elsie knew how to box; and there was enough laughter on this one afternoon to justify the brief joke.

At the end of April he was at the Welsh Lewises' again, and again, with the two younger boys, for ten days that consisted mostly of Welsh rain. Then their schools claimed them, and life was resumed at the flat. Work; but this summer mostly on scraps, for again there seemed to be anything but a clear or single goal. Friends. Visits to

Wrest. And plans afoot for still another charity performance; a glitteringly star-filled revival of *Crichton* at the Coliseum. For this he was writing in extra parts—by enlarging the staff of servants in the first act—and preparing what he described as “seductive” announcements for the Press. But the shadow of war hadn’t really lifted. It was coming closer again. At the end of May—two days before the Battle of Jutland, and a week before the loss of Lord Kitchener and the *Hampshire*—Peter Davies joined his brother’s regiment in France. Nineteen that February. Tall, but almost alarmingly thin. Only yesterday, it seemed, in a perambulator in Kensington Gardens, the youngest of the original three. And now . . .

On with the rehearsals. The assemblage of stars was almost beyond belief, and took in every branch of the stage. Gerald back in his old part. Arthur Bouchier as Crichton. The three sisters by Miss Lillah McCarthy, Miss Gladys Cooper, and—with a special boxing interlude—Miss Lily Elsie. George Robey as one of the Odds and Ends. And Miss Vesta Tilley—who complained, to Barrie’s delight, that her tailors were keeping her waiting now while they made officers’ uniforms—as the Page. Seats at a guinea and upwards, but they were packed, and the whole performance was repeated a fortnight later at the London Opera House—not yet a cinema—for King George’s Pension Fund for Actors and Actresses, with standing room only again.

But still there was the war. July 1st. Beginning of the first, four-and-a-half-month Battle of the Somme. Death of Charlie Barrie, the elder of Alick’s two sons—leaving a widow and three children—on the opening day of the attack, though for nearly four months his fate would be still unknown. Now his uncle must do more for the survivors than ever. Death, in the same, ceaseless shambles, of E. V. Lucas’s brother, who had played in that Kent cricket match three years ago. Then Gilmour’s eldest son was killed. And then, on the same day that brought definite news of Charlie’s death, his younger brother’s name would be in the long list, too. The Somme. Half a million British casualties. An advance, by the end of November, of perhaps five miles. Incredible courage in front, and incredible obstinacy behind. But the whole war was beyond all human control now. It must still go on, and on.

Barrie remained in London right through July, and for ten more days while Michael went to the Public Schools camp. No Scotch

holiday, even in an hotel, this year, for there were to be more rehearsals at the end of August, and with Peter in the thick of the fighting now, it seemed impossible to be so far away. So there was a fortnight, with Michael and Nicholas, at Lady Juliet Duff's house near Bangor—another friend of the last few years, and from now onwards to the end—and then the boys went on to the Hugh Lewises', while Barrie returned to the flat. The rehearsals were for a revival of what he had described in a recent letter as "an old conventional harmless play of mine," or in other words—twenty-three years after its first London production—of *The Professor's Love Story*. Willard had died two years ago, and the new star, now under his own management at the Savoy Theatre, was H. B. Irving. While the new heroine was a young actress, only just turning from precocious success in musical comedy, with another very well-known theatrical surname. Miss Fay Compton. Support, also, from the intensely reliable Holman Clark, from Miss Henrietta Watson, recently released from *A Kiss for Cinderella*, and Miss Kate Moffat, of *Bunty Pulls the Strings*.

You see what the whirligig of time had done. The play which Henry Irving had commissioned and then turned down was a vehicle now for his son. Thoughts also, perhaps, of another early disappointment at the Savoy Theatre; of *Jane Annie*, and its seven weeks' run. But now, on September 7th, 1916, though the critics would inevitably draw attention to its age, *The Professor's Love Story* had another uproarious send-off. The new audience found quite enough Barrie in it, old-fashioned as it undoubtedly was, to keep them laughing and choking happily enough, and the son's performance gave a good deal more than a hint of what the father's might have been. It would run on steadily now for twenty-nine weeks; and having seen it launched, the author returned to join the two younger boys in Wales.

They left on Friday the 15th, the plan being to spend the last few days of the holidays in securing Nicholas's outfit for Eton, where he was to follow his brothers this half. The end, after fifteen years, of the long Llewelyn Davies connection with Wilkinson's. There can be no doubt, either, that the necessary shopping was done. But not with Barrie. On Saturday a telegram arrived from Miss Herbert at Wrest. With nearly two hundred cases in the wards, fire had broken out yesterday in the roof of the east wing, and though it had been extinguished, and though, by swift and admir-

able organisation, all the men had been transferred elsewhere, the building was seriously damaged, not only by fire but by water as well. Lord Lucas, who had returned from Egypt some months ago, as a flying-instructor, and was expecting to leave for France at any moment in command of a squadron, was unable to get away from his duties. So Barrie was summoned, and turned up at once. He spent the night there, spent Sunday morning discussing the position and outlook, and would have resumed the discussions in the afternoon if—on the principle that misfortunes never come singly—a piece of partridge-bone hadn't become lodged in his throat at lunch.

There were still plenty of doctors and nurses on the scene, but they were quite unable either to extract it or force it down. They recommended an immediate operation in London, and Barrie returned there at once. Saw a surgeon, arranged to go into a nursing-home; and then decided, heroically, that Wrest must still come first. So he was back on Monday, by which time Lord Lucas had also arrived and further confabulations took place. The staff were in favour of rebuilding and carrying on, but the expense would obviously be enormous, the time, in war conditions, would almost certainly run into many months, and Miss Herbert—who had been supporting the whole weight and responsibility of the hospital for nearly two years—was quite clearly at the end of her physical tether. So Barrie—"full," says her diary, "of kindness, Scotch shrewdness and reserve"—plumped authoritatively for the only sensible course. Lord Lucas took the same view. And that was the end of Wrest. A few days later Lord Lucas decided to sell it, with the bulk of its contents, as it stood. And on October 2nd he left for France.

Meanwhile, Barrie had again returned to London and seen another surgeon, who now thought that an operation could be avoided. Arrangements with the nursing-home were cancelled, and the second surgeon's treatment was successful, for the pain diminished, and a few days later an X-ray photograph showed that the bone had gone. But while this was still uncertain, he wasn't only occupied with Wrest. On the Tuesday after the fire Peter arrived back in London, invalided, though unwounded, after sixteen weeks which would leave their mark on him for life. While on the Wednesday—a couple of days before Michael, as a senior boy, would follow—Barrie insisted on taking Nicholas down to Eton and Macnaghten's himself. What a week! What incessant giving out of help and sympathy,

with a bone stuck in one's throat. The word "heroically" slipped out just now, but most certainly it stays. There was something dogged and rugged when it came to these tests. He never questioned his own orders, whatever he avoided or evaded elsewhere.

So the fate of Wrest was settled. A second visit to Eton showed that Nicholas, unlike Michael, had taken to his new life without a qualm. Jack had reappeared for another slice of leave. And presently Peter was discharged from the Wandsworth military hospital, though he still seemed silent and haunted, and both he and Barrie knew what must happen, at the very best, in a few more months. In the last week of October, when the news came that both her sons had been killed, Mrs. Alick Barrie arrived as a guest at the flat. More help, and more unsparing sympathy and kindness. And then more sadness again.

On November 4th Lord Lucas failed to return from a flight over the German lines, and was reported missing. A month later his death was officially announced. Forty last May, he had been young in everything except the years which he had so gallantly disregarded in order to risk his life. Loved by all who knew him, but pledged always to courage and adventure, he had chosen the path of danger, and had brought to it an enthusiasm which mocked at caution or fear. He had been extraordinarily happy in those last eighteen months, and it would have been treachery now for even his sister to mourn him as others were mourned. Yet Bron Herbert had gone, and his place, once more, could never be filled. Barrie contributed a paragraph to *The Times* in which all this exaltation rather than grief is expressed, and as it came from his heart. But he had lost another friend and another hero, and the war still went on.

This autumn, also, his other hospital at Bettancourt was closed. Elizabeth Lucas had given all her thoughts and strength to it for a year and a half, but other organisations were at work now, and for a long time the strain had been affecting her health. She, too, indeed, would always bear the marks of this sustained and tremendous effort, which was the beginning, also, of much sadness in her life. Her daughter has written of this, with truth and insight, and no more need now or ever be said. Except that Barrie never forgot what she had done for him and for those children, nor failed to do whatever he could in return. And that through all the strange and hidden misery of the situation he never lost Elizabeth, or E. V., or Audrey, as a friend.

It was Lady Scott, fitly enough, who introduced another hero at the end of November this year. He was in hospital, recovering from wounds received at Beaumont-Hamel—but he was wounded nine times in all—and Barrie was taken to see him. Bernard Freyberg, V.C., D.S.O.—ultimately with two bars—and to be mentioned, before the war was over, six times in despatches. Aged, at this moment, twenty-six. In August, 1914, he had been a dentist in New Zealand, but had awaited no general call to arms. He had at once made his own way to England, raising funds on the way by his spectacular skill at swimming, had then joined the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, and had been the first to land, in more than epic conditions, on the coast of Gallipoli. There he continued to display such bravery as strongly, though inaccurately, to suggest that he was ignorant of the existence of anything else; and for the rest of the war he was either displaying it again or lying in hospital waiting for another chance. Never has there been such a man of valour. One shudders, perhaps, as one thinks of him as a dentist. Yet one needn't. Since for one thing he never returned to his old profession, and for another, he would always be quite as kind as he was brave.

And as simple? Yes and no. Simple always in every sense connoting honesty and virtue, but the very last man to describe as all brawn and body and no brains. The body, scarred all over, remained tremendously impressive. But Bernard Freyberg adjusted himself, with something more than ordinary intelligence, to flattery and fame. In that Royal Naval Division, and afterwards, there were friends of a very different upbringing and stamp. They couldn't and didn't attempt to hide their admiration, yet as Freyberg passed more and more into this circle, how easily—if he hadn't been Freyberg—it might have softened him or turned him into a snob. It didn't. He remained entirely himself. The background altered, but nothing could touch his integrity. If that's being simple, then simple is one of the right words. And of course he was infinitely simpler than Barrie.

But there was a link at once. Each, as it had been with Captain Scott, looked up to the other for qualities which he envied, and found them, and friendship as well. Barrie, of course, contributed all the cunning; was the one who consciously began playing his cards. He had met the bravest man in the world, and if charm could do it didn't mean to let him go. But Freyberg, again like Scott, was discovering a hero himself, and used magnetism of



another kind. "You had so much to give, and I nothing." Untrue, as before, but irresistible from anyone with a record like his. Thirty years between them this time, and Barrie won't be Barrie if there aren't moments of impatience with so much faith and trust. The phase is on its way where sometimes it must be as if he had conjured up something almost too overwhelming, and must even show that this feeling is there. But that's only on the surface. Beneath it, and only just beneath it, his love and loyalty are untouched. While as for Freyberg's love and loyalty, they will never flicker for twenty and a half more years. Neither of them ever says this, but they both know that a secret relationship is involved. For, of course, if Barrie had ever had a son, it would have been he who was the bravest man in the world.

All this while there had been days in the study, too. Still no sign from within, as old and new notes were turned over, of anything really or clearly recognisable as another full-length play. But once or twice there had been almost a spate of the shorter stuff. "I either work a deal too much," he was telling the Duchess of Sutherland, just about this time, "or not at all, and of late I've been slinging off heaven knows how many short plays, but once I think six in a week. How awful if it came to 366 in leap years." These six, in fact, were the scenes for another all-star and very nearly all-Barrie *matinée*, planned for early next year. But there were plenty of others too. Partly habit, partly anodyne, and partly a constant interest in what the pen might decide to do next. "Mostly of no account," he adds, and then or later he must have thrown at least dozens of these experimental fragments away. Only one that has survived can be definitely assigned to this autumn. "The Fight for Mr. Lapraik," it was called; or then, on second thoughts, "The House of Fear"; and as he had it typed, he must have thought it one of the more promising ideas. A Jekyll-and-Hyde affair, the struggle for possession of a middle-aged man between the forces of good and evil. Eerie. In fact, terrifying. A mixture, as it might be, of Barrie and Poe. But though the cast was small—husband, wife, and man-servant—it demanded, in its thirty minutes or so of running time, the full resources of a revolving stage, and it isn't surprising—if it was ever submitted there—that it was thought altogether too alarming and depressing for the only possible setting; that's to say the twice-daily variety programme at the Coliseum.

December. Early in this month public disappointment and im-

patience with the state of hostilities, and skilful manœuvrings behind the political scenes, led to the fall of the first Coalition under Asquith, and his replacement as Prime Minister by Lloyd George. Few, except the wire-pullers and those who believed in the newspapers that supported them, felt any great confidence that the change could affect the course of the campaign, and all Barrie's instincts—political and personal—were still on Asquith's side. He clung to his old Liberalism, he was shocked and disgusted by the way the thing had been done, he felt the deepest admiration for Asquith's conduct under eclipse. Yet there was also the germ of more detachment than you might expect. There were doubts and hopes as well as loyalty. And there was little of the uncompromising Liberal rancour as time went on. No one who had risen to power could fail to interest him, and the moment that he was interested, he had to go further and bring out the old sorcery. Mr. Asquith, and Lord Haldane, and presently Sir Donald Maclean, were first quietly and then firmly drawn into the magic circle. But so, without any prejudice or infidelity, and not so very much later, were Lloyd George and Bonar Law. For of course it was the man that mattered, and the closer he came to each in turn, the more, almost always, he would find—being Barrie—to admire.

More politics later, perhaps, though we mustn't entirely accept his own hints of all that his secret agency achieved; and distinguished statesmen, though frequently and momentarily spellbound, could never really feel—thank goodness—that he was one of themselves. Meanwhile, in December, 1916, there was a visit to the Hardys at Dorchester, for a local performance of scenes from *The Dynasts*; followed by the Christmas rehearsals of *Peter Pan*—again under Boucicault, and with Miss Unity More—at the New Theatre, and of *A Kiss for Cinderella* at the Kingsway. While on Christmas Day itself, after a week's try-out in Baltimore, the latter was presented by the Charles Frohman Company at the New York Empire, with Miss Adams once more as the star, and Norman Trevor as the policeman. The fact that America was still officially neutral may well have been less reason for a somewhat bewildered reception than the general queerness and pronounced English atmosphere. But Miss Adams, of course, had every quality for this kind of heroine, made another personal hit, and secured the largest possible number of gulps. The play ran for a hundred and fifty-two performances, or just four less—in a larger theatre—than in London.

January, 1917. Barrie at Brighton again, with the two schoolboys, for the middle of their Christmas holidays. But still writing one-act plays, and one, born by the seaside, which pleased him a good deal. No title yet, but several letters speak of it as being about four charwomen and the war, so there is no difficulty in our giving it a name. *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*. It came out in a rush—though not, of course, with all the printed prefatory and explanatory matter—and wouldn't wait long for its chance. Just as well, perhaps, that it was finished so quickly, for the next few weeks were hardly conducive to concentrated work. Nicholas developed chicken-pox, and then—almost at the last possible moment—passed it on to Michael, so that both were kept back from Eton, while their guardian guarded them at Campden Hill Square. Michael's convalescence was occupied with such a violent outbreak of drawing that Barrie suddenly wondered if this were to be his line after all. George du Maurier's grandson. Why not? He arranged for some professional instruction, and then, for the time being, the outbreak passed off. But Michael was going to be something pretty remarkable sooner or later. There was never a moment's doubt of that. And still—getting on for seventeen now—he was the closest companion of all. No secrets. No shadows. Only the image, the flattering and transparent image, of Barrie's own reserve. Character and cleverness, fully authenticated by his housemaster as well. Yet always one dread. What if the war weren't over in time, and Michael's turn must come too? An icy terror that gripped at the heart, and then must be hidden; for if this had to be, there must be no weakness at which even Michael could guess. There could be no peace without victory. Everyone still knew that.

Mason was home again in February, and spent a week in the spare room at the flat. But this time it was the guest who went down with bronchitis—to be followed by pneumonia—and he left, not for his mysterious duties, but wrapped in blankets for Douglas Shields's Park Lane nursing-home. Two months before he was out again; but something rather important had happened just before he went in. The scene, Adelphi Terrace House. The host, pacing and smoking, had been speaking of what now seemed the almost endless search for another real plot. There was his desk full of oddments and false starts; but they all seemed to end there; there was nothing solid to fill his whole mind. A shoulder and an eyebrow were raised together. It was hopeless, of course. He'd used all his

good ideas. He was up against a brick wall. *A Kiss for Cinderella*, he gloomily insisted, had been the last full-length play, and now he had reached the end.

Something, it may have been, behind this provocative pessimism. He knew well enough—though the pause this time had been a long one—that there were still doors to be opened and rooms to be explored. *But that was the mood which now possessed him.*

And then, once more, Mason and Providence stepped into the breach.

What, asked the one with incipient pneumonia, about that old idea of the group of people who longed for a second chance, and were given it, only to discover that there was no such thing? It had been at the back of his own mind ever since he had first heard of it—years ago, now—and he was still convinced that it was the best theme of the lot. Barrie still seemed doubtful, but the next morning he dug out his own early outline of the story, and the next evening he read it aloud. It was clear almost at once, and to both authors, that the problem had been solved. Even as they talked it over, the process of expansion was already at work. The pen, it appeared, had done with indecision, too. It was off again; slowly at first, but soon with complete assurance that it was back on the right road. In little more than a fortnight it had finished the first draft. No need to look further now, or to wander down any more by-ways, as the polishing of *Dear Brutus* went ahead.

February 16th. All-star matinée, and tremendous gathering of Royalty and the aristocracy, at the Palace Theatre, in aid of the Cavendish Square War Hospital Depot. Barrie's six scenes, to which a ballet had now been added, were lightly linked together under the title *Reconstructing the Crime*. H. B. Irving as a judge. Boucicault and Miss Vanbrugh, Nelson Keys and Arthur Playfair, Gerald du Maurier and Miss Gladys Cooper, and others equally famous, in a series of rather personal and professional jokes. Charity, indeed, covering some rather thin lines and situations, and not hesitating to interrupt them so as to sell various articles by auction. The ballet—*The Origin of Harlequin*—Barriefied from an old fable—was entrusted to the Gaiety Company, so that there was no serious competition with Russia. But with so many stars on the stage that two of them—Mlle. Delysia and Miss Lee White—could be spared merely to change the numbers in the proscenium frames, there was no short

measure in the matter of well-known faces. The fund benefitted by over three thousand pounds, and if Barrie described the whole thing as balderdash afterwards, at least it more than achieved its immediate end. Exhausting, for the moment rather exciting and stimulating, and then something to be forgotten as soon as he could. But again he had contributed more than the labour and the use of his own name, for there had been a handsome cheque as well.

That evidence comes from the same record which reveals something else. It was all over now between Mary and Gilbert Cannan. She had got what she wanted, but it wasn't possible that she should keep it. The second chance, doomed from the outset, had flared up into a few years of defiant happiness—to which she could still and always look back—and then payment had begun. Black Lake had gone, and other, cheaper houses which still showed the cleverness and taste. But Cannan would never be a famous or successful author now, for there was a twist inside him, stronger than anything that she could straighten or repair. He had left her, for his own doom, and presently—for in those days it took more than this to secure it—she would be manœuvring for a second divorce. A countercheck, so easy also in those days. You had to ask your husband to return to you, and if he returned for five minutes, that was the end of your case. No divorce, then, but no hope of a fresh start. The twist became still more twisted, and Cannan would vanish—though well cared for—from the world of ordinary men. Tragedy. Complete and inescapable, through long, lingering years. No second chance for Gilbert Cannan, either; even if he had ever really had the first.

So his wife was in Chelsea now, using those quick, clever fingers in another hospital dépôt, but so near the end of financial resources that even her pride couldn't hide this from her friends. And Barrie was told, and couldn't possibly let it go on. An arrangement was made, through his solicitors—provisional at first, but afterwards on a settled basis—for the payment of what developed into an allowance. And presently, though not just yet, they would be meeting each other again. Not often, either. And never, for that was impossible, on the old terms. Both had changed, perhaps, but Barrie, in protecting himself, had changed far more than she had. He had driven those early memories so deep into the background, and had erected so many defences against them in the years since

the crash, that he could face her again almost, indeed, as though he were now someone else.

A new approach, then, but only to the limit that he allowed. There was a kind of friendship again, and the memories weren't really forgotten; though each, more and more, would remember in a different way. For the best part of the last twenty years she lived abroad, and they only met when she came over to England, though he always knew when she did. An hour or so at the flat, and then she had gone again. Both more and less observant than he suspected. Not a ghost. She was far too vivid, vital, and conversational for that. But there were ghosts, on such days, in the offing. And one, always, was of the thin, small, pale, and still desperately ambitious young author who was brow-beating the great J. L. Toole over the casting of his new farce.

March. Revolution in Russia. The British Press doing its best to explain that this was really a good thing: still talking hopefully of the steam-roller, and of the greater efficiency which might be expected from it now. Deadlock in France. An advance in Mesopotamia. A check in Palestine. Slow movement at Salonika. Submarines held, but far from defeated. More air-raids on Kent. And Barrie back at rehearsal again, at the New Theatre, where Boucicault was preparing another triple bill. A good one, too, though the old prejudice would affect it even in war-time. *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*. *Wurzel-Flummery*, the two-act comedy which introduced A. A. Milne to the West End. And the first act of *The Adored One*, with its new ending, and its original title of *Seven Women*.

This programme was presented on April 17th, or in other words two days after the entry of the United States into the war, and two days before the Canadian troops stormed Vimy Ridge; but in darkened London there were still eager attendants at every first night. This evening it must have seemed even to those on the lookout for too much sentiment that *The Old Lady* was perfectly timed; and as the curtain fell—after an equally perfect performance by Miss Jean Cadell in the principal part—even these suspicious characters were forced to join in the applause. It isn't above criticism, particularly in some of its over-burdened humour, but for all the fancy that is mingled with its pathos, there is an obvious and invaluable sincerity too. Barrie is perhaps writing more like Barrie than ever,

and there are tricks in the touches of what he would never admit to be technique; but the main theme has come from somewhere deep down in him, and the deadly peril of mawkishness—which in an abstract of the story would seem to be almost the first characteristic—has failed this time to trap his pen. A war play. And a sentimental war play, whatever we have just said. But he was right when he was pleased with it and felt so clever about it last January. For he had picked his way through dangers which he had planted in his own path, and emerged, still a sentimentalist, but one who was being honest on this occasion with both his public and himself. "A Salute," he called it in that first playbill, and in this quality—however queer or exaggerated his devotion to old ladies—it shines with straightforwardness and truth. One can't pretend that the title alone didn't madden some of the more rugged realists, or that as soon as they had escaped from the theatre they didn't mock at what had just pierced their hides. But it wasn't only for its own purpose or at its own time that *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* achieved what its author meant. This, surely, whether it is acted or not, is one of the little plays that must last.

Then came *Wurzel-Flummery*, so light and still so *Punch*-like that the critics were ashamed to be seen laughing, but which would lead soon enough now, by way of *Belinda*, to the big success of Milne and this management in *Mr. Pym Passes By*. And then, with Miss Irene Vanbrugh in Mrs. Campbell's old part, *Seven Women*, and the end of a distinctly appetising night. A good Press, as they say—though of course neither an old hand nor a beginner must be encouraged too much—but it didn't prove to be one of Boucicault's luckier dips. Eight weeks or so, and all three plays were withdrawn. By that time, however, Gerald du Maurier had already heard of "The Second Chance," and was as keen as Mason. It would almost certainly be ready for him, and he for it, by the autumn.

Meanwhile, still in April, Peter was passed fit and sent back to France, while Barrie took Michael and Nicholas to the seaside, and then on for another ten days' visit in Wales. As for Jack—twenty-two last September—he had been on another destroyer (with another gold band on his sleeve) since October, or in Edinburgh when not at sea; and here he had discovered and become engaged to the extraordinarily pretty daughter of a Scotch banker. Miss Geraldine Gibb—Gerrie, in these pages, henceforward—nineteen

years old, and, once more, just about as pretty as she could be. Barrie was informed, but both he and her parents were in favour of caution as yet. They mentioned youth, present and prospective means, and the eternal problem of marriage in the navy. So Jack and Gerrie must be good, and wait a year—to convince others of what they didn't doubt for a moment themselves—and thus, for the time being, the solution might seem to be shelved. Impatience in Edinburgh, and a not wholly unreasonable attitude in the Adelphi. Yet again a disturbing if inevitable sequel to taking charge of a family of boys.

More change in the offing. Barrie has been considering it for at least a year, if not longer; ever since, in fact, the Pennells had left their studio-flat overhead. Sometimes he had urged a friend or friends to take it, but now he had suddenly decided to move upstairs himself. It would need a good deal of alteration, for his own purposes, but it was larger, and now that Nicholas was at Eton there would clearly be less and less justification for keeping on Campden Hill Square. He didn't immediately face this part of the decision, for though the house was empty so often now, it was still full of something that he hated to give up for good. But his own transition, from the third to the fourth floor of Adelphi Terrace House, was to take place almost at once. Seven and a half years since he had first come to live here—longer than at Gloucester Road, though it didn't seem like it, and a little less than at Leinster Corner—but now, on June 24th, or Midsummer Day, there was to be the last move of all. It would take some doing, for the studio was to be remodelled, by Edwin Lutyens, the whole of the new flat was to be redecorated, and the war-time workmen were few and slow. Much hammering and sawing up aloft, as the new, brown bookshelves were fitted, and as a corner of the big room was partitioned off to form a kind of private or personal kitchen. Elizabeth Lucas was abroad still, so Barrie himself must choose the curtains—grey, with a red lining—and the matting for the floor, and other such details. The vast, cavernous hearth would smoke horribly at first, though this and all the other stop-gaps and drawbacks were gradually adjusted and put right. Six months, at least, before he had really settled in, though he was there, off and on, all the time. The same address and the same carefully-guarded telephone number. The same staff, as yet. And so much of the same furniture, though with additions presently from Campden Hill Square, that it was quite



clear from the very beginning whose flat it was. Then this would become still more unmistakable, as the spirit of the owner permeated both new and old.

The new play was still being revised, and thoughts of a new title were drawing nearer. Visits to Eton, where Michael was celebrating the summer half with tonsillitis and Nico with measles. A new plan in his mind, in which Hardy was invited to join, for another visit, under official auspices, to the British front in France. But Hardy, at sixty-seven, would prefer to stay where he was; to dream of Napoleon rather than to see a modern army under fire. Barrie, however, had the best part of a week only just behind the lines, in the middle of July. He climbed the Messines Ridge, or what remained after the terrific explosion which had led to its capture last month. He saw balloons being brought down by German aeroplanes, and their observers floating to earth. He managed to get forty-eight hours' leave for Peter. And—this time in very considerable danger—he sought and finally discovered George's grave, among thousands of others, near Ypres. The whole visit stirred and moved him, but there was little that he could express. Or perhaps that he wanted to express. Courage, discipline, all the vast organisation for more and more destruction, still going on, two years after he had first heard the thunder of gunfire on the Marne. Flattery and civility from staff officers. Immense admiration from their silent guest. But this wasn't his world, and it never even occurred to him to write of it. He was glad that he'd gone, he didn't fail to appreciate that others couldn't go, but there can be no doubt that he was just as glad to get home. He had seen too much for one with his kind of vision. He knew too well now what boys in their last year at Eton were expected, and wouldn't hesitate, to face.

The Public Schools camp again at the beginning of August, and then a return, with Michael and Nicholas, to Scotland. To the Trossachs Hotel on Loch Katrine, in Perthshire; "pre-eminently," says a letter from this address, "the spot where you are supposed to stand on a rock and recite Sir Walter Scott from the guide-book. A very wet rock too at present. May is the best month for fishing if you come in August, and August is the best month if you come in May." But the main excitement, for all three visitors, had been the first sight of Gerrie, with Jack standing proudly beside her, on the arrival platform at Edinburgh. They had all dined together that evening, and afterwards the host had chartered a four-wheeler for a

conducted tour round his old, student haunts. Already he was well aware that Jack was even luckier, and Gerrie even prettier, than he had been told. And yet, for some queer reason, he had to dramatise that first meeting—in more senses than one—and in a letter to Lady Juliet Duff he transferred the scene to the Trossachs Hotel, where, as a matter of fact, Jack and Gerrie came on and joined him.

Here is the story as he chose to tell it, and at any rate the characterisation, in each instance, is revealingly near the truth.

"We were all outwardly calm but internally white to the gills. Nicholas kept wetting his lips, Michael was a granite column, inscrutable, terrible, I kept bursting into insane laughter and changing my waistcoats. So the time of waiting passed, the sun sank in the west and the stars came out with less assurance than usual. What is that? It is the rumble of wheels. Nico slips his hand into mine. Michael's pose becomes more Napoleonic, but he is breathing hard. The chaise comes into view. I have a happy thought. They are probably more nervous than we are."

Then comes the meeting, and afterwards Michael, Nicholas, and Barrie are left alone together.

"M. What do you think?

"N. I like her awfully.

"M. Don't be an ass. You don't know her at all yet. What do you think, Uncle Jim?

"J. (with a great sigh of relief). The first impression is very favourable.

"N. Rather! What is favourable exactly?

"M. Do shut up, Nico.

"J. I should call her tall, dark and pretty.

"M. (who knows more about it). She *is* pretty. The question is, is she very pretty?

"N. I think——

"M. It doesn't matter what you think.

"J. I should say she is very pretty.

"M. She is. It's not a common type of prettiness.

"N. No, it isn't. What is type exactly?

"J. She's elusive, that's what she is.

"M. (guardedly). It may be that.

"N. Yes, it's that. What is elusive?

"In the meantime another conversation is going on in another part of the edifice, which is probably to this effect.

"Jack. Buck up, Gerrie, that's the worst over.

"Gerrie. Oh dear, I was so nervous and they were all so calm.

"J. It was a biggish ordeal to you, but of course it was nothing to them. Besides, they are three to two.

"G. How do you think I did, Jack?

"J. Splendidly. I never admired you so much.

"G. I took to Nicholas at once. I feel I can get round him.

"J. Rather. What about Michael?

"G. He alarms me. Did anybody ever get round Michael?

"J. I can't say I ever did. After all the third chappie is the important one.

"G. (gasping). I know. Oh, Jack!

"J. Yes, he's a bit like that. His heart's all right.

"G. Is it? His face is so expressionless.

"J. It's an uncomfortable face of course.

"G. He never smiled once.

"J. I bet you he thought he was smiling all the time. That's the way he smiles.

"G. Good gracious!

"J. He's really rather soft. We can all twist him round our fingers.

"G. (looking at her fingers). I wonder.

"J. You see he is essentially a man's man. He doesn't know what to say to women. They don't interest him. I think he's a woman-hater.

"G. Don't!

"J. What are you to wear for dinner?

"G. Does it matter? He won't notice.

"J. No, but Michael will. He takes Michael's opinion on everything. All depends on Michael. If Michael says 'Let them marry next week—'

"G. Oh oh oh!

"J. If Michael says that, Uncle Jim will fix it up. If on the other hand Michael says 'Delay for three years,' it will be fixed that way.

"G. Oh, if he should say that!

"J. He won't.

"G. How can you be sure?

"J. I should kick him."

. . . . .

There the cunning little conversation piece closes, with its portraits of all three boys—though Jack could never conceivably have called anybody a chappie—and its familiar self-caricature of the author. But as a matter of fact, no kicking took place. Gerrie's prettiness, and Jack's obvious happiness, had already cleared the way. Even the rest of the one-year engagement was now an exploded idea. They would be married as soon as possible, and start life, with Barrie's assistance, in a furnished flat in Edinburgh, where it still looked as if Jack's duties would be keeping him for some time. So back they went, full of hope and guile; while Barrie and the school-boys moved on to a shooting lodge, near Fort Augustus in Inverness-shire, which had been lent them by the present Lord and Lady Astor. Lochs, burns, and more fishing for Michael and Nicholas, but they were only there for just over a week, and then moved again—acquiring a croquet set on the way—to the F. S. Olivers' at Edgerston, near Jedburgh. This was Barrie's first visit here, though he had stayed often enough with the same host and hostess at their house in Berkshire, and while his affection for both of them, if possible, increased, he also developed a deep and lasting feeling for what was to him a new part of Scotland. His mind turned naturally to the Young Pretender, to Robert Burns, and still more loyally and lovingly to Mary Queen of Scots—every compatriot's first heroine—all of whom had been closely associated with the little border town. But this didn't restrain the golf-croquet, nor the long discussions with Mrs. Oliver as to whether Jack—who it now seemed would be off to sea after all—should have his wish and get married at once.

Perhaps a fresh feeling at this moment—shared also by others—that the tide of war had turned, assisted a favourable decision. Or Mrs. Oliver may have helped, in which case she would never have anything to regret. Or Barrie himself, supported by Michael or not, thought happiness better than caution. In any case, the wedding was sanctioned and hurriedly arranged. The visitors, and the Olivers too, left Edgerston for Edinburgh on September 4th, and on the following day Jack and Gerrie were married in St. Mary's Cathedral. "Michael," says another letter, "was best man, and Nicholas the one who enjoyed himself most. It makes me feel older than ever." The next morning Barrie, with the two Etonians, returned to Campden Hill Square.

For the big study in the new flat was still far from ready, even

though it had escaped the air-raid on Jack's wedding-night, when three bombs had fallen within a few hundred yards. He was back, however, in a few days, picnicking among workmen and chaos, and it was at this stage also that there took place one of the rare changes in his staff. Brown still remained, but his wife, with a weak heart, was no longer fit for her full task. Entrance, accordingly, of Mrs. Stanley—whose real or unprofessional name was Miss Stanley—who became cook-housekeeper, and remained cook-housekeeper and far more than that to the end of the very last chapter. Another remarkably faithful and sympathetic character, who developed in the background, or sometimes in the foreground, as part of the inimitable atmosphere too. We mustn't forget her, in those next twenty years. She, also, earned and must be given a salute.

As the Etonians returned to Eton, Barrie again re-entered a familiar stage-door. The new play had found its title—a teasing title, though it would come in the end to be as familiar as it had once been obscure—and there had never been any question of its finding this particular management. Gerald du Maurier, of course, and Frank Curzon, at Wyndham's. They wanted it, the author wanted them to have it, and it slipped into rehearsal at the right time of year, while still almost hot, as it were, from the author's oven. With the right company, too; there could be no doubt of that. Gerald himself—in anything but a vehicle, but in what he made one of the best parts of his life; Norman Forbes, Sam Sothern, Will West, and Arthur Hatherton, as Mr. Coade, Mr. Purdie, Matey, and Lob. Certainly, also, one must mention every one of the women. Miss Hilda Moore as Mrs. Dearth. Miss Jessie Bateman as Mrs. Purdie. Miss Maude Millett—whose signed photograph a young Barrie had begged more than thirty years ago—as Mrs. Coade. Miss Doris Lytton as Joanna Trout; Miss Lydia Bilbrooke as Lady Caroline Laney; and Miss Faith Celli—a former Tootles and a future Peter—as the dream-daughter, Margaret. A fine cast on paper, and still finer in the play of *Dear Brutus* that they all immediately loved. A play of magic, by Barrie, Shakespeare, and Gerald—in that order, but they all had their share—and of magic that infected the players weeks before an audience yielded to the spell. Barrie with a plot, and Barrie expressing a philosophy on which he had mused for years. Shakespeare always behind him, and sometimes beside him as well. Gerald, rattled and strained by the war, half thinking already of leaving the profession which he loved and hated, pour-

ing this feeling—the old restlessness and recklessness—over his technical gifts, and so turning the written lines into a fresh and merciless form of truth. It was the right moment, theatrically speaking, for him, too; in no revival did he ever approach that performance again. It was his play, though if you read it you may be astonished by the actual brevity of his part. Or his play, let us say, and Miss Celli's, who also rose, under the magic of the three collaborators, to something more poignant than can be found even in the text. Yet all those eleven parts fitted their wearers like gloves. A flawless production, except possibly for its interpretation of Lob's taste in decorating his drawing-room—Mary Barrie would never have passed that—and, in its own mood and convention, as near as almost absolutely nothing to a flawless play.

Do artists take their easels into a wood to paint the moon by moonlight? That, as one re-reads it, is one of the few moments of sudden doubt. An all but irrelevant slip in the pattern of fantasy, where already one has believed in the incredible and the extremely improbable without demur. For Lob's house and Lob's house-party are real only in terms of the stage; shorthand symbols which the sorcery enables us to read. Figures in a mystery play, and yet, because of Barrie—and once more because of Gerald du Maurier at Wyndham's Theatre in October, 1917—with truth and humanity as well. Never mind about that problem in chiaroscuro. Will Dearth was enough of an artist to paint blindfold if he chose, with the three collaborators to guide him—and a fourth whom we had nearly overlooked. George du Maurier, whose songs Gerald sang in this play, whose tricks and movements he half-consciously copied, whose beard he so very nearly wore in that second act—but the company feared the effect on his own public, and stopped him—and whose *Peter Ibbetson*, that standard saga of the second chance that comes only in a dream-world, had informed the spirit of *Dear Brutus* too.

As for Lob, the master of the puppets—who never appears in the second act, nor opens his mouth in the third—there is the link, of course, with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but a still closer resemblance to a much later Puck. Who else was hospitable and observant, mysterious and silent? Who else was at least mildly mischievous? Who else was child-like and cunning, young and old at the same time? Who else delighted when his friends, under his own persuasion or bewitchment, made slight fools of them-

selves? And who else must always be strange and different, as if he, too, had fairy blood in his veins, or had come—on however long and interesting a visit—from some fabulous world of his own? The friends certainly recognised the portrait, of Lob as Barrie, or of Barrie as Lob. There was an actor in the part, and he had his own outward appearance, and had even been given lines to carry the temporary distinction a little further still. Barrie didn't talk to the flowers like that. Nor did he crawl, in pique, under drawing-room tables. Yet somehow, when the wrong words were unwittingly spoken, one could almost swear, afterwards, that he had. Or as he withdrew into himself, it was as if he, also, had suddenly left a large, empty chair. And Lob, again—far more than the little maidservant, Liza, in *Peter Pan*—is quite obviously the author of the play.

Its first night took place on Wednesday, October 17th, and it was an immediate and enormous success. The Press glowed. It appeared now, indeed, that their praise for its predecessor had been wrung from them under some kind of mistake; that the author, though they hadn't said so at the time, would have done far better to leave the war alone. But admittedly there wasn't a trace of it this time—which was no drawback, after more than three years, to the war-weary public, either—there was the richest and most authentic personal quality, and even those who felt pledged to a traditional formula had now no cause for complaint. Once more, it was superbly acted. And though the climax of the second act would always, as it should, be the real event of the evening, it set off without a hint of hesitation, and ended without a suggestion of weakness or fatigue. The queer, war-time theatrical boom was still on, but even allowing for this, *Dear Brutus*—thus differing, perhaps, from *Chu Chin Chow* and *A Little Bit of Fluff*—was an easily explicable box-office hit. Three hundred and sixty-five performances, or fifty-five solid weeks, in 1917 and 1918; but then—again unlike those rivals—two hundred and fifty-eight performances at its first revival, three and a half years after the war. And over a hundred performances, in a much less worthy production, seven years, again, after that. Professionally speaking, it was a gold-mine in London alone. Barrie, at fifty-seven and after twenty-six years' play-writing, was still at the top of the tree.

A situation, of course, again to be taken with the very maximum of outward calm, and with all the old determination to go on hiding where he had hidden so long. The weekly cheques came in,

averaging at least a couple of hundred pounds for the first five or six months, and the author occasionally flitted for a moment past the wings. But his own part of the job was over, and his own life was always nearer and more important than anything that was happening in a canvas wood at Wyndham's. The pen, though it had nothing particular to tackle, must again be watched and obeyed. In the new flat, but still not in the new study, where the workmen remained entrenched. Nevertheless, there were visitors in October; Jack—on sick-leave, instead of either in Edinburgh or at sea—and his pretty young wife. Off and on, rather, for they paid other visits, and presently moved to Campden Hill Square, where Mary Hodgson still reigned. Just as well, perhaps, with Michael home for a fortnight in November, on sick-leave of his own.

A glimpse comes to us in early December from John Galsworthy's note-book. Of another air-raid at five o'clock in the morning, and a foregathering, as he tranquilly describes it, with Barrie and the Jack Davieses on the ground floor. And of how on that same evening the Galsworthys entertained Barrie, Joseph Conrad, E. V. Lucas, Gilbert Murray and a daughter, and H. W. Massingham at the Royal Automobile Club. "Very jolly," says the entry; and adds: "Barrie did the corks." But thirty-four civilians had been killed and injured in the raid. Only fourteen years since that first flight at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina, and this was what war meant now. It was the autumn of Caporetto, of the second or Bolshevik revolution in Russia, of Passchendaele, of Verdun again, and of British armies bogged but still battling in the Flanders mud. The day after that dinner-party Allenby entered Jerusalem, and so the dreadful scales must rise and fall. No peace without victory was still the voice of patriotism on both sides.

Yet literature can sometimes feed on war. Such books were, of course, already on their way, and occupying a leading position amongst them was Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu*; first published in 1916, and then translated into English in the following (or biographically the present) year. Read by Barrie with two kinds of appreciation at once, literary and heroic, and then starting a third idea in his mind. His only war scene so far—or the only one taking place at the Front—had been in *Rosy Rapture*, and had made no pretence at more than perfunctory actuality. But since then he had been in France and Flanders himself, and there was an incident in *Le Feu* to which he held a closer clue now, and which had almost immedi-



ately suggested another one-act play. A matter of two British soldiers—escaped prisoners—stumbling on a house where a French couple were to spend their wedding night; and, in Barrie's version, first misunderstanding the situation and then retiring, tactfully; to a pig-sty. Six different typescripts of this play were found afterwards among his papers, representing one wouldn't care to say how many written variations; but showing that, when it felt like it, his genius could still be as industrious as ever. At the beginning the two soldiers were a Scotchman and an Oxford don, and at the end they are both Cockneys, and one has become a naval stoker. Dozens of other bold or subtle changes as the anecdote still wandered through his thoughts. *La Politesse*, as it would finally be called, wouldn't be finished for nearly six months, but its origin and inception must also be placed in the autumn of 1917.

Which was drawing to a close now with rehearsals at the New Theatre for the fourteenth *Peter Pan*. Miss Fay Compton as Peter this year, still working her way up to a part which would bring her name and Barrie's together for good. While in America—on December 12th, to be precise, and at Atlantic City—William Gillette made his first entrance as Dearth in *Dear Brutus*, with Miss Helen Hayes, in her first important rôle, as Margaret. This opened at the Empire in New York two days before Christmas, with a warm welcome, continued to run there for twenty-three weeks, and returned in the following year. There was nothing wrong with *Dear Brutus* for New Yorkers, either, and no question this time who should have the credit and praise. Gillette, who was over sixty now, an established and enormously popular actor, had a fine part and made the most of it. But again it was the whole, and the author, that counted; for no one, not even a star or his manager, could dream of calling this play "Will Dearth."

Barrie's own Christmas was spent in London, with Jack, Gerrie, Michael, and Nicholas at Campden Hill Square. The new year opened with the knowledge—not unexpected but decidedly depressing—that Russia was deserting her former allies and preparing to make a separate peace. But England must still fight on; and under the curious system by which destruction can have all the public money it wants, but healing must go round with its hat in its hand, the Red Cross authorities were still organising auctions and sales. For the fourth of these biggest affairs, to which Messrs. Christie again gave their help, the main items were to consist of books,

manuscripts, and autograph letters, and Barrie—under the style or title of Chairman, and egged on and assisted by E. V. Lucas—was to set about collecting the lots. Of course, he would begin by looking through his own valuables, and discovered and presented one of the two manuscripts of *The Little Minister*, but he also hurled urgent letters at every author and friend whom he could think of, and amassed a very considerable collection at once. When the sale actually took place, in the first half of April, these contributions were, in fact, only a part of the gifts that were offered; but Barrie certainly put his back into the literary section, which without this could hardly have realised some fifteen thousand pounds.

It was partly in connection with this work, and partly in the Christmas holiday tradition, that he, Michael, and Nicholas spent another week with Lucas, in Sussex, in the middle of January. Then Eton started again; at last the new study was ready; and though there was still confusion in the other rooms, it seemed possible to envisage some sort of order before very long. This, and some domestic difficulties at Campden Hill Square, brought another change into sight. Quite suddenly he had faced it and made up his mind. Mary Hodgson, who had gradually passed from nurse to housekeeper, but of late can have had very little to do, had suggested leaving nearly a year ago, and Barrie had made her stay. Now, as the house emptied again, he accepted and even welcomed the idea. She would go, after all the long association, into a new place; from which presently she would emerge as another kind of nurse, but still and always the boys' friend. While 23, Campden Hill Square was given, as they say, to a house-agent, and until he disposed of it would contain merely the furniture and a caretaker. When Michael and Nicholas came back for their next holidays, it would be to Adelphi Terrace House. There would be a billiard-table there, which Barrie liked, and a gramophone, which he detested but had paid for. A holiday-time establishment now of a man of fifty-seven and two boys of seventeen and fourteen. They weren't related, but the bond was as firm as ever, and the promise, so willingly and unhesitatingly given, was still being kept. Yet the elder boy would be eighteen this summer, and they all knew what that meant. No need for letters to show, as they do so often now, the constant, haunting knowledge of a shadow that lay ahead.

February 20th, 1918. Extract from a letter to Elizabeth Lucas. "I had an odd thought to-day about the war that might come to some-

thing, but it seems to call for a poet. That in the dead quietness that comes after the carnage the one thing those lying on the ground must be wondering is whether they are alive or dead. But there the veil that separates the survivors and the killed must be getting very thin, and those on one side of it very much jumbled up with those on the other. One can see them asking each other which side of the veil they are on, not afraid that they may be dead so much as curious. And then the veil thickening a little, and the two lots going their different ways. You could even see some going with the wrong lot, a dead man with a living, a living man with a dead. Perhaps it is of this stuff that ghosts are made. These be rather headachy thoughts.

"I expect the lot on the other side had as many Germans as British, and that they all went off together quite unconscious that they had ever been enemies.

"To avenge the fallen! That is the stupidest cry of the war. What can the fallen think of it if they hear it?"

A letter written at midnight. Barrie alone in his big study, and thinking, as it were, aloud. But thinking always as an author. The veil was a symbol in his mind, and so was the whole conception. Yet something had set them going again. He stood back a little, and saw how some who believed in the veil were tricked by their own hopes, while others, who didn't, might come so much nearer to incomprehensible truth. The battle scene faded, but another was taking its place. A room in England. A mother who seeks to pierce the mystery. A father who can only grieve and mourn. To which might their dead soldier-son appear? And when he did appear, what message, for both, would he bring? The pen was moving now in the big study, whether it were in the hand of a poet or not. He was writing the one-act play that was to be called *A Well-Remembered Voice*.

There was another task in this early spring, in which the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, and the German Army began its last and almost overwhelming advance. A number of his literary friends and admirers had decided, quite rightly, that it was high time that Leonard Merrick should have the honour and if possible the success that were his due. For almost every author who read him found something to admire if not to try and imitate as well; yet though he had been writing now for something like thirty years, though his name was widely known, and he was invariably well reviewed, there

still seemed to be some quality that held the ordinary public back. He was too gentle, perhaps, or too conscientious, or too funny, or too clever, or too light. But whatever the trouble might be, his supporters were determined that he should have another chance. Sponsored and published by Hodder and Stoughton, there was to be a new uniform edition in which each volume should have an introduction by a distinguished literary hand. Pinero, Wells, Chesterton, Hewlett, and several others all set to work. And Barrie wrote thirteen pages for the charming and enchanting *Conrad in Quest of his Youth*. A sincere tribute, for he, too, had absorbed some of Merrick in his own day; yet it has to be admitted that the main object failed. The Press again did its best, but either the public had made up their minds already, or else they were merely suspicious of this united attack. The flourish of trumpets died away. The edition fell almost completely flat. And poor Merrick continued to supply his delicate caviar with no more encouragement than before. Another example from the Calamities of Authors. He just never had the right sort of luck.

But there were other proofs on Barrie's desk now, and Hodder and Stoughton would have certain compensations after all. Another uniform edition, this time of the Plays of J. M. Barrie, was on its way, and the first three volumes—*Quality Street*, *What Every Woman Knows*, and *The Admirable Crichton*—would be issued by them and by Scribner's by the end of the summer. More revision by the author, and more cunning and enjoyable expansion of the stage directions. Steady sales here, year after year—for if plays sell at all, that's how they do it—and gradually there would be six other volumes as well. Plenty of work, as one sees, in the study this spring, even though there was no attempt at any new full-length play.

There was a plan in March, which went a certain distance and was then abandoned, of another visit to the French or Italian front. Inquiries, pulling of strings, the notion of suddenly becoming a journalist again; and then it was all off. Justifiable mistrust of his own qualifications was the chief reason. But it was true also, when it came to the point, that he had seen as much as he wished of warfare, and didn't really want to go.

So he was still in the flat when Michael and Nicholas arrived from Eton, early in April, and a day or two later, they all went off once more to stay with the Lewises in Wales. Michael's record in

the spring half had included a poem in *The Eton Chronicle* and first prize for throwing the cricket-ball in the sports; and Barrie was equally proud of both. He was proud also, though in a different way, of Nico's complete lack of interest in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, which had been set as his holiday task. This was right. He was being a schoolboy. And Barrie—Sir Walter as well, perhaps—would always approve of that. The holidays ended, to the sound of the new gramophone, in the flat. All was quiet again. Yet the first news from Eton showed that even Nico wouldn't be a schoolboy for ever. He was taller now, at fourteen, than his guardian, and reported that he was going into "tails." "I asked him to go into them one at a time, so that I could get used to the idea. Seems so little time since he was in blue and red, and we were all flying about in Kensington Gardens."

There was a lull at the moment in France, or so it seemed after the heavy fighting of the last six weeks. Zeebrugge and Ostend had both been bottled up, and American troops were massing behind the lines, but Germany still had the initiative—would use it to some purpose, too, before the tide turned—and still the War Office was asking for more men. Brown, though he had turned fifty now, was examined and warned to be ready. At the other end of the scale Michael must be preparing to follow Peter and George. Barrie went down to Eton, in the middle of May, to talk to Macnaghten and others. It was arranged that Michael should leave at the end of this half, and go—as he wished, so that he might still be with friends—into the Scots Guards. A last summer holiday first; and, in fact, he would still find himself on a waiting-list, and at Eton, after that. But at the moment it seemed certain enough that he would be a soldier in a very few months.

On May 27th the third great German offensive began. Its first wave reached the Aisne, its second rolled once more right up to the Marne. By the time that exhaustion and counter-attacks had temporarily steadied the line, there were again German troops within forty miles of Paris. Yet in London, where there had been seven air-raids this year, but none—as the inhabitants couldn't help noticing—for the last month, there was still a strange mixture of ignorance, courage, and calm. Only a few experts realised what was happening, and even they were too close to see clearly; if, indeed, the whole truth can ever be known. Under heavy censorship, optimism and pessimism still fed on their old diet of dreams.

The inertia of human habit still ordered hundreds and thousands of lives. So why shouldn't the London theatre go on? It did. And at Wyndham's, where *Dear Brutus* was now nearing the end of its eighth month, Barrie was rehearsing again.

Generously, for no doubt he could have placed them elsewhere, he had decided that the first performances of *La Politesse* and *A Well-Remembered Voice* should be given for the benefit of charity. Another special matinée, for the Countess of Lytton's Hospital, had been arranged for the afternoon of June 28th, and the programme was to open with a revival or rather an elaboration of *The Origin of Harlequin*, in which the dancing was to be done by juvenile sprigs of the aristocracy. Gerald du Maurier and the actor who had been playing Matey in *Dear Brutus* had the principal parts in the first of the two new plays. In the second, Forbes-Robertson, Miss Lilian Braithwaite, and Gerald again were to be the father, mother, and their dead son. Hard work in the mornings and afternoons at Wyndham's, for of course it is always hardest the first time. But probably no rehearsal on the Sunday—June 23rd—when it is known that the author dined out.

At the Berkeley, with young Lady Dufferin; and present also in the little party was the eldest and extraordinarily beautiful daughter of the Earl of Wemyss. Lady Cynthia Asquith, married now for eight years to the former Prime Minister's eldest surviving son; Herbert Asquith, whom his family and friends called Beb. There had been quite a flutter eight years ago, in high Tory circles, at this notion of a union between two families of such different political standpoints, and a good deal of opposition to it, too. Nevertheless, the wedding had taken place, and for four years Beb Asquith had pursued his career at the Bar. Then came the war, and after a few months in the Royal Marines, he had been serving as a gunner in France and Flanders ever since. Separation; and hard times, too, especially compared with the home that each had come from, and the hopes which they had shared for the future of an ex-President of the Oxford Union. Lady Cynthia—whom in a page or two we shall probably be calling Cynthia, for the biographer happens to have known her all his life—showed the traditional qualities of the daughter of an eleventh earl. She was brave, she appeared far more sensitive than she was—yet at the next moment was far more sensitive than she appeared—and with the necessarily modified backing of a family whom the Government was now doing its best to tax

out of existence, she combined laborious voluntary war-work with determined attempts to earn a little money as well.

One thinks—particularly with a peerage on the table—of women like this as having far more relations than those in a humbler rank. Statistically this is absurd. But they are far more conscious of their relations, because this is part of their normal upbringing, and far more aware of their own strains of heredity, too. They can't help it. Whether, again, this makes them tougher or softer is a mystery to which no convincing solution has yet been found; for they exist as exceptions to their own most obvious rules. But it can make them curiously and bafflingly self-conscious. Presume on this, and you may be up against the stiffest and starkest pride. Ignore it, and you're missing an absolutely essential clue. Are we getting any nearer, by these subtle observations, to Lady Cynthia Asquith, who would be thirty-one in September, who had married a Prime Minister's son, who was a mother, who worked at a hospital, who rode a bicycle about the London streets, whose husband was now a captain in the Royal Field Artillery, who had hundreds of identifiable relations, and dozens of distinguished ancestors—Scotch, English, Irish, and very likely Welsh and French as well—who was remarkably well-read, but completely untrained for any profession, who still hankered romantically at this time after a career on the stage or screen, and was exquisitely beautiful by every known test and from every point of view?

At any rate that should give some of those who don't know her a rudimentary idea to go on with. This is still June 23rd, in 1918, and after dinner now. The party had moved on to Lady Dufferin's temporary flat in a neighbouring mews. Lady Cynthia was sitting on a sofa with Sir James Barrie. They had met before—the first time through Lady Lytton, who was a great friend of both—and not long ago she had spoken or written to him about her wish to get work on the films. Now, suddenly, he reverted to this point; but of course in his own way. He could, he said, have helped her, but he didn't really approve. The implication, which should have been clear already, was his old, fastidious contempt for the art of acting, coupled with his old and still ineradicable belief that earls' daughters belonged to a distinct species of the race. Still smoking, and still carefully controlling any trace of expression on his face, he abruptly propounded another idea.

If it were work that his companion on the sofa wanted, then he could give it her, and a salary, too. He would like her to come and

help him. His papers and correspondence were in an appalling muddle. He hated the idea of professional efficiency—typewriters, shorthand, filing-systems, and all that—and the society of most human beings in his room. Yet it was a kind of secretaryship that he was suggesting. Vaguely. As an experiment. No fixed hours, or even fixed days. Just as it might possibly suit them both. At any rate, he said, his companion might come to tea with him one afternoon, and have another talk about it. He then seems to have changed the subject or left the sofa. For the moment this was all that took place.

It had been an impulse, of course, though there had been a little prompting from another source as well. Yet even impulses have an ancestry of their own. The matter of untidiness among his papers didn't really trouble him, or at least he was pretty well used to it by now. No new broom was going to change his habits, which had served him well enough in the past. Yet always there had been an impersonation, or view of himself, as one who gave orders to some beautiful creature—preferably, or more than preferably, some member of a noble family like this—and had them instantly obeyed. In fact, he might never do anything of the sort. But Power was again at the bottom of it. Proof that he had reached this kind of position, as well as everything else. In England it is of course snobbish even to hint that anyone is a snob. Yet still one must say—here, once, and never again—that it did give him enormous and lasting pleasure to think that his secretary was the daughter of an earl.

Not that she was his secretary yet; but she was going to be. She came to tea with him at the flat on the following Wednesday; they had their talk, though it still hardly defined her duties; she was shown the chaotic mass of papers in his drawers; she was warned of the difficulty of getting him to pay in any cheques; they talked about Bernard Freyberg, whom she also knew; they went on to a rehearsal of *The Origin of Harlequin* at Wyndham's; and finally, when they separated, it was understood that she would begin coming more or less regularly as soon as she could.

At the moment she was still pledged to her hospital work, and seems only to have put in one more appearance before he went away at the beginning of August; still without settling very much. For instance, she found herself sitting at her employer's big writing-desk, while he walked about and talked to her. But they tore up some old letters, took some photographs out of a chest, and managed,



after a struggle, to put them back again. He also said that, for secretarial purposes, she must use some other and imaginary name. Her first suggestion—the name which she had selected as a film-actress—failed to please him. But the second was approved and adopted. It was thus that she became the mysterious and in a sense non-existent C. Greene.

Meanwhile, the special matinée took place, and as seats had been sent to the critics, it was also a kind of miniature or informal first night. The ballet was again dismissed as the trifle that it was; *La Politesse* was accepted as an obvious gift to the music-halls, though in fact this was its first and last performance; but in *A Well-Remembered Voice* there was found, at this still well-chosen moment, another genuine and moving contribution to Barrie's interpretation of the war. Indeed, as there was no attempted laughter this time, it was for some even more penetratingly effective than *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*; and though second thoughts might suggest that the author's eschatology was still rather uncertain and obscure, there could be no question of his technical skill. *La Politesse* was never published, which again may be taken as Barrie's own view of its importance. But in November of this year, Hodder and Stoughton, and Charles Scribner's Sons, issued a volume called *Echoes of the War*, containing *The New Word*, *The Old Lady*, *A Well-Remembered Voice*, and a fourth war-play, as yet unacted, which had appeared in the August number of *Reveille*; a short-lived but exceedingly distinguished periodical—profits for charity again—edited by John Galsworthy. *Barbara's Wedding*; written about the same time as the two plays at that matinée, but generally regarded as the least satisfactory Echo of the four.

Not that it was a matter of Echoes just yet. The full and original thunder was still booming in France, and in the middle of July the Germans actually crossed the Marne. For three days the tide was at its highest; and then Foch saw his chance, and attacked in turn. July 18th; the French and American victory at Château-Thierry. The invaders had begun to retreat. Hardly anyone dared hope that it was also the beginning of the end; it was still supposed that Ludendorff would attack elsewhere. But he didn't. He couldn't. Week after week now he was compelled to fall back. After four years of this bitter struggle, with its long record of doubt and disappointment, a faint, fresh note was at last making itself heard. One held one's breath. One scarcely liked to allude to it. But it was

there now. And it was just possible that it might turn into a pæan of thanksgiving and triumph.

Barrie had Jack and Gerrie staying with him again this month, with Jack on leave before joining another ship. He also sat between the Prime Minister and Lord Morley at a big dinner which Lord Curzon gave for the Dominion premiers. And then, at the beginning of August, he went north, with Michael and Nicholas, for another and longer visit to the Olivers at Edgerston. "Leading a bucolic life up here," says a rather telegraphic letter to Gilmour. "The great event is going out in a dog-cart to bring home the lamb. We won the lamb in a raffle (despite Parliament), but always when we go for it, it is 'up in the hills,' so we keep going. Fine hay crop, but no fishing owing to the want of rain. Michael shoots grouse. He will be going to Bushey for Scots Guards in November. . . . The war news heartens one up a bit."

That was the position. And Gerald du Maurier, Michael's forty-five-year-old uncle, was a cadet at Bushey already; having handed over his part in *Dear Brutus* to H. V. Esmond, some weeks ago, for the last lap of its long run. It closed at the end of this month, when the two boys went on to stay with contemporaries, and Barrie returned to the flat. On August 28th his new secretary arrived for what was to be her first real day's work. Neither of them still quite knew what it was; but she tidied, and tore up, while he walked to and fro, and smoked. The pipe and the intonation often, as yet, made it very difficult to follow what he said. He asked her to explain the difference between a vicar and a rector, and what debentures were; also to decipher some of his own handwriting, which fortunately she found it rather easier to do. She had her own desk now, in the little annex which had been planned as the private kitchen. But it seemed to show that she was giving some sort of satisfaction when she arrived one day and found that the partition had been taken down. Henceforth she sat looking on Robert Street, while Barrie prowled, or worked at his own big desk in the far corner of the brown, book-lined room.

Quite an early discovery, as the sorting went on, was a bundle of unpresented cheques for a total of seventeen hundred pounds. She was certainly in a very strange job.

But they were getting to know each other. A subtle adjustment was beginning to take place. The employer still had any number of impersonations up his sleeve, had no intention of producing them

all at once, and was completely successful for a long time still at representing himself in several very false lights. But then came a burst of frankness and truth, and the observant secretary found another impression to discard. Neither, of course, was the same with each other as with anyone else—for this is a commonplace of all human intercourse—but they could be bold as well as watchful, and both meant to get over the preliminary strangeness as soon as they could. Naturally, this progress must vary from day to day; but they were distinctly fascinated by much that they were already learning, as they worked, and talked, and fenced. There was a touch of domesticity in their association, from the very outset, which filled a deep, wide gap in the employer's life, and would always be a part of the secretary's indefinable charm.

He paid her a visit one day, at her house in Regent's Park, and met her four-year-old son, who was called Michael, too. How long since he had found himself in this nursery atmosphere? But he hadn't forgotten what to do in it. He made a dead set at the child, who had the further advantage for his purpose of being remarkably good-looking; got down on the floor, and began playing games with him at once. A sixth little Davies, as it were? Not quite. Or certainly not yet. Nevertheless, Michael Asquith's childhood would join on presently, and closely enough, to the old, tremendous tradition. Another unexpected result of engaging a secretary.

It was through Cynthia, and some time in September, that the official suggestion came to him for another visit to the Front, on this occasion as guest of the American Army. And it was she, after he had at first jumped at it, and then tried to back out, who kept him up to the mark; for she had a pretty firm hand sometimes, when she had made up her own mind. But before this happened, there were further signs of her influence and importance, too. Towards the end of October—when his immediate task was revision of *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* for another volume in the uniform set of plays—a friend came to see her at the flat. Charles Whibley, last heard of in this story something like twenty-five years ago, since when he had been a Paris correspondent, a prolific essayist, and much else that was distinguished and authoritative in the world of ink. This was how Barrie met him again, and how their own, old friendship was resumed; enthusiastically, on both sides, for the rest of Whibley's life. And it was Cynthia, again, who produced another and new

literary friend for her employer. Sir Walter Raleigh. The tall, immensely learned and lovable Professor of English Literature at Oxford. If he didn't crack his head on the beam over that fireplace, he was exceptionally lucky. But perhaps he was, and so was Barrie, for one doesn't often make friends like this at fifty-eight. Not that Barrie had by any means finished yet.

Here is another glimpse of the new secretary, this time in a lighter mood, and certainly prepared to run a considerable risk. A dinner at Adelphi Terrace House, in the last week of October. Two guests. The secretary's father-in-law and Augustine Birrell. Average age of the party, sixty-four. The secretary and Lady Dufferin disguised themselves, dressed up as parlourmaids, and waited—with traces of provocative and deliberate inefficiency—right through the meal. Birrell was completely deceived. Mr. Asquith stuck to it that he had seen through the joke all along. But in any case, Barrie—who gave each of the conspirators seven-and-sixpence for her services—had enjoyed every moment of the game. Once more an odd secretarial side-line. But once more very clear evidence of a new and unaccustomed spirit or presence in the flat.

Much easier to laugh now, anyhow; for the war was quite obviously ending. Bulgaria was out of it already. By the end of October Turkey was out of it, too. On November 4th the Austrians asked for an armistice. And on November 8th, when Barrie, accompanied by Gilmour, set off for his last tour of the Front, everyone realised that Germany was on the point of collapse. It was on the next day that the Kaiser abdicated. There could hardly have been a more exciting moment for the two travellers to arrive.

They were whirled about in staff cars all up and down the line. Ypres, Verdun, and sometimes two or three hundred miles a day in the Argonne. But Barrie was in Paris on Armistice night—to which he returned after resuming his trip, and where he met and took a great fancy to Colonel House—and dined and spent the evening with Lady Scott, who had been living and working here for some time. After dinner they went out in the streets, where people were dancing, and shouting, and turning on the lights. "*C'est fini!*" was the cry, and at the moment all that mattered. A ring of revellers formed round them, again and again, holding hands, and once only releasing them in return for a kiss. It was finished. Four years and three months, but the war to end war had come to its own end at last. Never again. Impossible for those who had been through it

and would always remember. The world was sane again. The millennium was here. *Vive Wilson! Vive Lloyd George!*

A moving and sardonic moment in history. But Michael was safe now. He hadn't even gone to Bushey. He had returned, after all, to Eton, and was given five hundred lines that evening for his own share in the general expression of joy. Jack, in his ship, was safe. Peter, still with the victorious army, was safe. "I forgot to tell you," says a letter this month, "I saw a band of German prisoners brought in, near Sedan, two days after the 11th, who knew nothing about the Armistice. They had been dug out of holes."

However, everyone else knew; and the lights were ablaze again in London as well.

## 21

By their illumination one pauses for another and narrower look at J. M. B. In these last few years he has been putting on a little more weight. He isn't the least fat, and never will be, but the old concavity has quite gone. The tremendous walks are considerably rarer now, though he hasn't finished with them, and still, in all probability, covers more miles of pavement in a week than most Londoners of his age.

But the headaches have almost entirely left him. He has grown out of them, or Nature has found a weaker spot on his chest. He still expects to have bronchitis, or at least a series of bronchial colds, not only when others are suffering, but often enough in the milder weather as well. His cough, a product of this weakness and his still insatiable smoking, accompanies him right round the year. On the other hand, he can eat practically anything. A touch of indigestion alarms him as it can only alarm those who scarcely know what it means.

His face is a little less gaunt than it was, but the delicacy, in both senses, is still there. More lines, of course. Darker shadows under the eyes. On the passport which he took abroad just now he described his complexion as "very sallow," but this was a deliberate exaggeration at his own expense. The eyes are as fine as ever, though he sometimes uses spectacles now for reading, which it appears that he obtained from an optician rather than an oculist. The hair is a little thinner above the majestic forehead, but its colour hasn't

changed. It is still as black as it was thirty years ago. His accent is still quite unaffected by more than thirty years in London; or so it seems until he meets another Scotchman, when you will notice that its characteristics are suddenly redoubled.

He isn't what anyone would call a well-dressed man, though it is long since he patronised any but the most expensive tailors. His acrobatic attitudes in a chair or sofa, and the amount of property that he still keeps in his pockets, soon knock any suit into the old, comfortable, easy-going creases. It is his habit, or so he says, to wear the Davies boys' cast-off socks. He still affects boots rather than shoes. And still wears a scarf under his overcoat, though the bowler hat is now, as on other heads, giving place to something much softer and more shapeless. He still sets out on all perambulations with a countryman's stick.

Nearest, still, among his men friends is E. V. Lucas, with Mason dropping back a little—for why should Mason, of all people, wait always for a sign?—and Bernard Freyberg forging ahead. Gilmour, the original and unalterable, continues to occupy a special position of his own. But one can't make a list, for it would be invidious and endless. Almost everyone, at one moment or another, feels that he is closer than the rest; and so, at that moment, he is. Or she is; for there are dozens if not scores of women, too. We do notice, however, and are bound to notice, what a lot of new names that both have and haven't been mentioned are associated with the statelier homes. They all have qualities. That isn't denied for an instant. A lot of them are extremely clever, and quite a number of them are beautiful as well. But Barrie still sees even more in them than this. They're romantic. He has made his way, in his own little boat, to the land where they live, and because he has discovered them like this, they belong to him. For though they may not know it, they are all characters in the longest of his unwritten plays.

His old friends are naturally rather nervous of them. They don't always understand that exploration has never stopped, for few if any of them are still exploring so diligently themselves. If they have been given the secret telephone number, then that, in Barrie's view, puts the onus of the next move on them; and if they make it, and all else goes well, they won't find that he has changed. But neither has the onus. So that some of these, too, are existing now on memories more than meetings.

Then there's his own family. Indestructible loyalty from the one

who is now the acknowledged head of it. Incessant generosity, and help, and sound advice. Influence in high quarters used over and over again on their very special behalf. But he doesn't speak of them very much, and some of the new and distinguished circle are surprised when they happen to learn that they exist at all. This still isn't disloyalty. It's a very practical division of an already astonishingly sectional mind. He wouldn't have his secretary use a filing-cabinet, but he has always used an invisible one himself. So the family remains very close, too, and sometimes they are allowed out of their own compartment; but not often, any more than others are allowed or encouraged to look over the edge. He is still in constant touch with the Winters—his younger sister, and her husband, and their son—and all will be guests in the top-floor flat. Maggie, particularly, must never lose her importance and pre-eminence, and presently, when she stays here, he even hires a piano, so that she can play to him, though there is something only just short of torment in every note. But during these visits how often he declines to admit anyone else. "Sir James's sister is here," says Brown's voice, or presently his successor's, on the telephone, "so he can't manage anything this week." She acquired additional value, if possible, in December of this year, when the only other survivor of their generation—the sister who had once kept house for Alick Barrie, and then married his assistant—died at her home in Aberdeen. Now there were only the two of them, Jamie and Maggie, as once, to all intents and purposes, it had been in the distant past; at Anchor Cottage, and in those lodgings on Campden Hill. The memory bound her more closely than ever. Most certainly she should play the piano, and even sing, if she wished.

Lastly, in this summary of Barrie just after the war, we come to his indispensable public. They had watched him during these years. They had known nothing of his private life, nothing of Wrest or Bettancourt, nothing—except in the most inaccurate form of hearsay—of his guardianship of the boys. They had been a little shocked by *Rosy Rapture*, not in itself but as coming from him, and some of those charity matinées had certainly troubled them, too. The short war-plays had touched or occasionally exasperated them, but it wasn't their habit to appraise any author on the strength of one act. Of the two full-length plays, *A Kiss for Cinderella* had found its special audience, kept it for nineteen weeks at Wyndham's, and drawn some of it back for the two, short Christmas revivals;

while *Dear Brutus* had more than doubled this record, and had been one of the outstanding theatrical successes of the war. So that it looks for a moment as though it were *Dear Brutus* in the first place, with *A Kiss for Cinderella* as a good second, that would be the real test—here and in America also—of how many more rungs the public would feel that he had climbed. Or the test, again, as to whether some of the trifles that had accompanied them should affect his position or not.

But that wasn't all. The thing wasn't only subtler and more cumulative, on account of the previous rungs and impressions too; but there was also the very important matter of his age. One doesn't pretend that the public paused to turn it up, but they knew, without this conscious process, that he was nearing sixty. They looked back at their own or each other's memories of the early books and plays. And again they didn't exactly stop to calculate that it was now thirty years since *Auld Licht Idylls*, and twenty-seven since *Ibsen's Ghost*, nor to check the long record of the double output since then. But it all added up. It was all there in the background. And even those who had resisted the general verdict, who thought him sentimental and nothing else, must also contribute to the setting which he occupied now. Impossible to detect the precise moment at which he became an institution. But this, undoubtedly, was what he was becoming, or had already become.

They were proud of him. They felt that he belonged to them. Even when they attacked him now, the same sort of feeling was there. It made some of the attacks pretty violent, as it always does. Or, again, baffled young writers must set up an imaginary Barrie at whom they could slog and sneer. Yet this, too, was a tribute now; an admission that he was immune from any ordinary damning with faint praise. The process had been far from automatic; of course it had taken more, and much more, than the mere passage of years. But the years had been part of it. Already there was a tendency to magnify them, so that both admiration and criticism might have even greater scope. Though only his friends were still allowed to set eyes on him, he had become a public figure; and already, this matter having been settled, there were signs of impatience that he should become a venerable public figure, too.

He wasn't altogether disposed to resist this. Perhaps, indeed, it had been part of the plan all along. Certainly it was beginning to be a very interesting notion now. There were occasions, also, when



the attacks gave him great pleasure, for though he hated the accusation of whimsicality, he loved it when a critic suddenly discovered that he was heartless or cruel. That's understandable. Though it isn't impossible to see what the critic meant, it struck him as equally flattering and absurd. As for the other charge, there was of course no dodging it now, and never would be; though it seldom failed to annoy. He mocked at it, and writhed under it; but one can't say that he hadn't asked for it, nor that it, too, hadn't helped to put him where he was. Thus J. M. Barrie and the English-speaking public combined to consolidate all the victories that he had won. There was perhaps more affection on one side than the other, for still and always he must oppose and obstruct their very natural curiosity about his personal affairs. But they bore no malice. They accepted even this as part of the legend that they had helped to create. By 1918 they would have accepted almost anything. For there was something about their mysterious little favourite in his unknown retreat that they found mysteriously flattering, too.

There's a new note-book this autumn, after a gap in which more than one must have disappeared. It sets off with ideas for articles, though there was little likelihood of their being written, and one isn't surprised that the third heading is "My Secretary," for that was how the mind still worked. Then comes "The Cow" again, with sub-divisions. "Girl—Act 1 as bird, Act 2 as kitten, Act 3 as cow." He offered this to Robert Loraine, demobilised from the Air Force and in search of a new play, though he hadn't written it, either. Always fun to puzzle an actor, though, and Loraine would have his chance later on. The entries continue, but mostly they are familiar—the old ideas still trying so hard to be given their opportunity too. He couldn't or wouldn't let them. The pen wasn't ready. It preferred—though he complained bitterly, for his secretary's benefit, of the labour resulting from this mis-spent past—to go on revising the existing canon for the Press.

He had gone down to Eton, a day or two after his return from France, for a fresh consultation about Michael's future. Michael, still feeling rather strange with a future at all, was prepared to do anything, and offered, as a start, to go round the world. But Barrie and Macnaghten had another idea. It was arranged that he should go to Oxford—to Christ Church—in January. One of the first of the new batch of the reprieved, who would vary so remarkably in

age and experience, as Oxford tried to pick up the four and a half years that had been dropped. "He is the most admirable boy I have ever had in my house," said Macnaghten's final report. It wasn't so far from the truth. There were very few gifts or virtues that Michael Davies didn't possess. Or Hugh Macnaghten, either, in Barrie's opinion from now on.

It was also, of course, just after the war that the general election was held which resulted in an enormous majority for the Lloyd George Coalition, the defeat of Mr. Asquith at East Fife, and the virtual disappearance of his supporters. Only twenty-six Liberal members were, in fact, returned, and it was thus that the party leadership in the House of Commons passed—until Asquith's re-election at the beginning of 1920—into the hands of Sir Donald Maclean. Barrie had an immense admiration for this tall, good-looking lawyer, who made such a remarkably good job of his unexpected promotion, and was one of his closest confidants and advisers from now on. It was all very secret, and remains rather mysterious, but it was anything but imagination in this case that his own hands were on a number of strings. Maclean stepped gracefully down from his pedestal when his Chief returned, and never achieved the same altitude again. But the friendship was another very firm and special one until his death in 1932.

So, in December of 1918 *once more*, to *Peter Pan* at the New Theatre again; this time with Miss Celli in the part that was becoming a kind of annual, professional prize. Writing a Christmas letter to a friend from the flat, Barrie gives words to a thought that for once must have been in other minds as well. "How long we wondered what a peace Christmas would be like, but what is it like? It is very silent, I think, as if it brought the dead men nearer and we wanted to know why they should be dead any longer. The mystery of why it should all have been seems to grow."

Michael and Nicholas were both back in the flat for the holidays, with Freyberg as a guest as well. Early in January their host gave a banquet—also in the flat—for the American admiral, William S. Sims. He sat between Sims and Lord Milner, and there were also present Gilmour and Freyberg, together with Galsworthy—who had left the Adelphi for Hampstead in September last—Belloc, Wells, Mason, Anthony Hope, E. V. Lucas, Walter Raleigh, Walkley, and

Gerald du Maurier. Cocktails by the Savoy. The rest of the collation by Mrs. Stanley. "When the time came and indeed thro' the festivities I was wanting to go and shut myself up in my bedroom. Upon me descended gloom. I can only hope it did not seem as sombre to the guests as to the host." Probably not, if one considers the company. Yet when Barrie himself realised that he was gloomy, it can hardly have been wholly hidden from the rest. On the other hand, it wasn't at all beyond him to be gloomy and funny at the same time.

Then Nico went back to Eton, and Michael set off for Christ Church. After the long delay Campden Hill Square had now just been let at last, so that some of the furniture was sent to his rooms in college, and some came along to the flat, while most of it was stored. All arranged by Barrie and Brown, who thus paid their last visit to the house together, and saw the desolation which would almost certainly be reflected in the first scene of *Mary Rose*. Not that either of them knew it yet. "I am pretty gloomy," says another letter, in February, again. "Can't get hold of an idea to write of that really engrosses me. When I am working I am all right." The note-book confirms this. There isn't a trace of *Mary Rose* yet, among all the entries and ideas. He is thinking of a play about the stage for Gerald, but it is obvious that neither this nor anything else is taking on life of its own.

Odd yet characteristic bit of Barrie-ism on January 23rd. Letter dated from the Athenæum, to Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, and read four weeks later, from the stage of the Empire Theatre, to an audience assembled at a special performance of *Dear Brutus*, which was given as part of the Lowell centenary celebrations. "If I were there," it begins, "to appear in public for the first and only time . . ." And then it becomes even odder. *Dear Brutus*, it continues, is an allegory. Dearth is John Bull. Margaret, the might-have-been, is America. "The play shows how on the fields of France this father and daughter get a second opportunity for coming together, and the nightingale is George Washington asking them to do it on his birthday." And so on. Astonishment of the distinguished audience. Astonishment, no doubt, of Gillette as he makes this incredible announcement. The magic from three thousand miles away isn't quite as powerful as all that, and the Declaration of Independence remains in force. In a better world, of course, authors would write letters like this, or

Barrie, having written it, would have been appointed British Ambassador in Washington—which was actually one of his fitful but ardent dreams—and history would immediately have been altered. Yet it would be a worse world in which these authors didn't, however confusingly, speak of the hope in their hearts.

Fashionable intelligence. A dinner, on February 10th, at the house of a well-known lion-huntress, and the lion's account of it. "The pressure has been applied all thro' the war, and in the fifth year I succumbed. To make sure I should have a sparkling time the host devoted himself to me exclusively, and never drew breath as far as I can remember till I recrossed the portal." Another dinner, a few days later, and again with the parlourmaid joke, at the flat. Guests: Evan Charteris (the parlourmaid's uncle), Charles Whibley, Professor Tonks, Mason, F. S. Oliver, and Freyberg. This time the second parlourmaid was one of the secretary's cousins, and there was another complete success in its own peculiar way, though no one, perhaps, was quite so much amused as the host. It was about this time, also, that Barrie began seeing more and more of his secretary's mother. It is still impossible to describe Lady Wemyss, and those who knew her could only be indignant if one tried. She had lost her eldest and youngest sons in the war—Heaven knows how many others whom she had known and loved—but she never lost her kindness and cleverness and youth and sympathy and charm. She had been beautiful too, once, but always the other and deeper beauty remained. She was very good for Barrie, very fond of him, and gradually he became a kind of relation for which there is no name. They understood each other, admired each other, and developed into the closest of friends. These things aren't analysed at the time, and afterwards only useless or unnecessary words are left. But we must add Lady Wemyss to the inner circle now, and there she is going to stay.

It was in February, also, that Peter was demobilised, and returned to England. He had been through something more than a furnace, and what was left of him was for a long while little more than a ghost; a shattered remnant that even Barrie couldn't help. He tried. He tried patience and impatience, as real fathers must still try in thousands of cases. But a shock that has lasted for all those months on end takes more than a reprieve to cure. Poor Peter, and poor Barrie. But there was a link between them, they both knew it, and slowly the present would again be buried in the past. Not much of

Peter on the scene as yet, though. He still had to fight his own way out of the war.

It was in the same month, again, that Frank Swinnerton, in his capacity as a reader for Messrs. Chatto and Windus, sent Barrie the typescript of Miss Daisy Ashford's *The Young Visitors*—which she had written, as you will remember, at the age of nine—and asked him to contribute a preface. This certainly wouldn't have been forthcoming if Barrie hadn't immediately fallen under its preposterous spell; but he did, and there can be no doubt that when the book was published in May, his name did a great deal to give it a runaway start. After that, of course, it ran almost out of sight, sold prodigiously for month after month, and was even dramatised in the following year with very considerable success. By this time—also of course—Barrie had lost some of his first enthusiasm, and in addition had to put up with a sturdy and persistent legend that he had written the whole text himself. He hadn't. He hadn't even altered a word of it. He was no more responsible for Ethel Montague and Mr. Salteena than for the Letters of Junius, and it is still difficult to see why anyone should have thought that he was. As, however, the legend was still finding support, and in print, nearly twenty years later, it may be too much to expect that an official denial will end it now. Nevertheless, once more, and though it may only be starting the whole thing again to reveal that he made a dramatic version of *The Young Visitors* himself, he did *not* write the book.

In March there was a revival of *Half an Hour*, with the original company, at the Coliseum. Diaghileff's Russian Ballet were in the same bill, and Barrie, who had always been at once interested and puzzled by this branch of the theatre, had an opportunity of studying them at closer quarters again. One dancer, however, was already his friend. The young, the graceful, and the incomparable Mlle. Lydia Lopokova had come to this country by way of America, where she hadn't only been fascinated by Miss Adams in *Peter Pan*, but had passed into a tremendous state of admiration for Barrie's books as well. After her arrival and success in London, she had written to him and asked him to write a play for her. Why not? She had acted as well as danced in the United States, and surely the best of all ways to get what you want is to go straight to the point. Barrie was amused—though one may well imagine that such requests had reached him before—but he was also flattered. And again, in the mood that was still pursuing oddness, what could be

odder than the conjunction of Barrie and a ballerina? They met, they struck up a close friendship, and almost at once he had another idea. A three-act comedy about the life, or the imaginary and fantastic life, of a Russian dancer. Now he would be working on this also, and Mlle. Lopokova was to star in it, so he told her, at the Haymarket in the autumn. Triumph of the system of asking for what you want, or in this case, perhaps, of being the right person to ask for it. Yet Mlle. Lopokova was, in fact, even more Russian than he realised, and there would be a surprise and a disappointment in this particular and still tantalising plan.

Meanwhile, it was holiday-time again, and Barrie and Michael were off to Wales. First for some fishing, by invitation of Lord Howard de Walden, at Chirk Castle; and then for three days at the Lewises', who paid him a return visit at the Adelphi in May. A bad chill at the beginning of April had once more frightened or persuaded him into an attempt to give up smoking, which this time he actually sustained for a month. It was finally defeated by the Royal Academy Banquet, where he and Hardy—who stayed with him for the occasion—were both guests. In May, also, the Winters had a fortnight at the flat, and, of course, there were his own visits to Eton and Oxford. And then, at the end of the month, a distinct disturbance to what, it was now discovered, had already been accepted and established as the new routine.

His secretary broke the news that she was having another baby, and would be spending the summer elsewhere. Ordinary secretaries, of course, hardly ever make an announcement like this; or if they do, it generally means that they're not coming back. But in the months that this secretary and employer had been working together each had developed a subtle interdependency. Barrie had found a friend and companion who fully understood his preference for unbusinesslike methods, who at the same time had brought very considerable order out of chaos, who never failed to look decorative, and had a mind on which he could almost always sharpen his own. Furthermore, he was in process of weaving a web round her and her friends and her family, and hadn't the least wish to stop. Cynthia, from her end, had discovered a fascinating and not at all ill-paid job—some of its ardours were still hidden from her—her husband was as yet in no state of health, after four years fighting, to become very much of a breadwinner, and, whether consciously or unconsciously, she had been weaving a web herself. Both felt

that strands were holding them; and though looking back afterwards they might also feel that in the summer of 1919 they had really hardly known each other, neither had the least intention of bringing the experiment to an end.

So it was agreed that the secretary should come up occasionally from Thorpeness, where she was proposing to retire, and attend to some of the correspondence. And it was understood, in much the same, vague way as the original arrangement had been made, that after this interruption was over, she should, if it suited her, drift back to her desk and other duties at the flat. Actually there was very little separation, for presently Barrie was visiting Thorpeness too; where he first met her husband—just out of the army—and another friendship began. And though he was in Scotland when Simon Asquith was born—on August 20th, in a London nursing-home—he was back before very long, and soon hovering round again. But Cynthia was very ill after this, so that it was some time before the other association was in fact resumed. In the interval, and again in many other intervals, Elizabeth Lucas sat at the desk and performed the duties. For Barrie needed a secretary now, and could no longer imagine how he had ever done without one. He was still slightly suspicious of even Mrs. Lucas's typewriter, and still recoiled from the notion of complete or cold-blooded efficiency. He also expected a secretary to interpret instructions which hadn't been given, and to deal with just as many letters whether he were talking to her all the time or not. But he had chosen well in these matters. He got what he wanted. After all, that was one of his gifts.

At the end of the Oxford summer term he and Michael paid a short visit to the Olivers at their Berkshire home, and there were other visits too. Arrival, also, from New York, of his manager, Alf Hayman, who took him to dine at Tagg's Island—with memories for the guest of a house-boat that had once been moored here long ago, before the thought of a big hotel and restaurant had entered anyone's mind. Hayman had an American girl with him who told the same guest, to his intense satisfaction, that he was the first nobleman whom she had ever met. But there was something far from satisfaction on another point. For it was just about now, also, that Mlle. Lopokova—with the new play at least half-written—was suddenly seized with an overwhelming desire to escape from the glare in which she lived. With no warning to anyone she just vanished. Actually, no further than to some Russian friends in St. John's Wood,

but no one knew this, though the papers were full of her disappearance, and the rest of the company were still dancing at the Alhambra. Barrie kept telephoning to her old address, but though she was aware of this, she must still apparently remain in hiding until whatever it was that had sent her there had worked itself out. The next stage of the adventure was that she reappeared in New York again, in the following February, danced in an unsuccessful musical comedy there, and eventually returned to Diaghileff and all her old glory in May. But at the moment, of course, the play came to a complete standstill. Not that the work was wasted; for presently it would be re-shaped into an affair in one act, with more dancing for the heroine and no spoken words in her part at all, and as *The Truth About the Russian Dancers* would reach the Coliseum—with Mme. Tamara Karsavina as its star—in the early spring. But this also was unknown yet. Just now, though of course he would have to forgive her in the end, Barrie was feeling distinctly sore with the siren who had started the whole thing. And indeed no one, anywhere in the story, had ever dreamt of playing such a trick on him before.

All very queer, and temperamental, and to say the least of it distinctly disrespectful. But then of course he must keep his annoyance just as secret as Mlle. Lopokova's mysterious whereabouts; and now we find him, with Nico back from Eton, playing ping-pong at the beginning of August with no other apparent thought in his mind. A left-handed player, still—despite all the smoking—with an unshakably accurate eye; but he was having some trouble with his other hand. About eighteen months ago a little lump on his finger—which he attributed to early literary excess—had suddenly become painful, and made his writing more illegible than ever. There had been ups and downs, as it were, since then, but now this hand and his whole right arm seemed to be temporarily almost crippled with some form of writer's cramp. Particularly irritating and alarming because—almost at the same moment that the play for Mlle. Lopokova was shelved—another kind of obstruction had at last been removed, and there was a fresh and urgent summons to his desk. It is as far back as 1894 that a note-book gives the first hint of the idea, and ever since then, at irregular intervals, a little more had been added. For himself, he would always feel that the summer at Amhuinnsuidh—two years before the war—had been the real moment of its birth. But whether it was a matter of seven or twenty-five years altogether, or quite possibly even longer, it



had now taken complete charge of him in this summer of 1919.

The Kilmeny legend, the thought that ghosts as well as those to whom they appeared could be puzzled and frightened, and particularly the notion of a mother-ghost returning in search of her child and finding an unknown man, had now picked up another gentle echo of the war. It was falling into acts and scenes, in one of the strangest time-schedules that has ever been planned, and Barrie was all hidden eagerness to get to work with his pen. But the physical difficulty was hampering everything. He just couldn't use or control what he had always regarded as his writing hand.

There was a solution, of course. He had been ambidextrous all his life, though he had divided the duties so clearly that even he didn't see it at first. But it was forced on him. He began writing with his left hand—a little anxiously, in case this should disturb his own magic—and though the first examples are spidery and uncertain, they improve rapidly enough. Furthermore, he acquired a fresh and startling legibility which delighted not only himself but his friends. Is it the same character that is revealed? He loved to think that it wasn't, and over and over again he alleged that the right-handed and left-handed authors were two authors and not one. He thought or pretended that the latter was *cerier*. It also gave him the opportunity of discussing him, as well as watching him, and thus dodging the rule against talking about himself. But whatever else was happening or developing now, he was mastering the only real hindrance, and was again absorbed in a play.

Engrossed, to use his own word. In the middle of August he went up to Edgerston again, with Michael and Nicholas, for three and a half weeks, and was working hard all the time. The play wasn't finished in this period, though as authors say its back was broken, and it was his main task for several more months. If one examines it, one can see how no scenario can give either the story or its quality, and how little rigidity underlies its elusive shape. It is a play based almost entirely on feeling, and from day to day he could put in scenes or take them out again, until once more he tired of this and suddenly left off. The guide, if you like, was his left hand. In the end it let nothing pass that wasn't part of the mysterious whole, or in other words that wasn't part of Barrie. But it still experimented and corrected typescripts for a long while yet, and was enjoying itself enormously all the time.

Much of this autumn, also, was spent in undergoing treatment,

but as yet with very little result, for his writer's cramp. At the end of October, and at his own suggestion, he stood godfather—with Ambrose McEvoy—to Lady Cynthia's little son Simon; and discovered that the officiating vicar, at the church of St. Marylebone, was a native of Kirriemuir. And then there is a sudden switch-over to another side.

For a full explanation of how the four Scottish universities are organised and governed, the reader is referred to other pages than these. But each has a Chancellor, who is elected for life or until he chooses to retire. A Vice-Chancellor, who is also the Principal, or acting and responsible head. And a Rector, whose duties are remarkably indefinable, and who is elected by the matriculated students for a term of three years. Politics and all sorts of other queer things are concerned in the choice of candidates, who may also have no previous connection with the university, and are sometimes selected merely in a spirit of wild Caledonian independence. On the whole, though, some form of distinction is essential; and when, with a lead given by their Principal, a body of students invited Barrie to stand for the Rectorship of St. Andrews this year—in succession to Earl Haig—they hadn't only pitched on a very well-known compatriot, but on an honorary LL.D. of their own foundation as well.

Of course he felt honoured again and few invitations could have pleased him more. He saw himself in the robes. He saw himself appreciated by the younger generation of his countrymen; a heart-warming tribute indeed. Already, one may be quite certain, he had thought of some ways in which he could address them, if and when their selection was confirmed. Unfortunately, however, there was a rival. A second caucus had nominated the fourth Marquess of Bute—who had at least nine other titles as well—and a contested election was the only road to what had suddenly become his dearest dream. He knew, of course, that absence of opposition was extraordinarily rare. But pride and sensibility had a pretty tough struggle before he decided to stand. It was a sign, perhaps, of a feeling now that he no longer objected to being a public character on his own terms or in his own way. He looked at himself and realised, quite frankly, that something of this sort was his due. And though there were elements in the occasion that would be even worse than a theatrical first night, in the end he came down solidly in favour of his own chances of success.

With perfect justification. On Saturday, November 1st, the result was declared as follows:—

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He had polled more than half the votes. Like Mason, or Maggie Wylie, he could—if there had been an opportunity—have cried: "My Constituents!" But in any case there was a satisfaction now that even he hardly attempted to conceal. Far more than the honorary degrees it showed that a seat of Scottish learning had put him and literature in the place that they deserved. For the moment St. Andrews had ousted even Edinburgh. He glowed with loyalty to its grey stones and red gowns. Here, also, is the beginning of another deep, firm, and lasting friendship with Professor James Irvine, who would himself become Principal and Vice-Chancellor a couple of years later, and would also come to know more than one side of Barrie as well as anyone on earth. But there were still a couple of years and six months to wait before the new Rector would deliver his Rectorial Address.

December, and *Peter Pan* again. Sixteenth year. Still under Boucicault's management and direction at the New Theatre, with Miss Georgette Cohan—nineteen-year-old daughter of George M. Cohan and Miss Ethel Levey—in the title-rôle. There seems to be something wrong, though, at any rate in the author's eyes. Impossible to imagine Boucicault getting slack—and one likes to think, for his sake, that *Mr. Pym* was only just round the corner—but the expenses were heavy for these short Christmas runs; too heavy, in any case, to justify the old Duke of York's polish; and there was some unlucky mis-casting as well. These things happen in the theatre, where even two performances in the first flush of a profitable success can never be exactly the same. Yet the author looked back suddenly, noted deficiencies, and wasn't best pleased. Didn't say much at the moment. But had already decided that there should be another management next year.

To some—indeed, to all the old addicts and enthusiasts—the play would never be quite the same again; for no one would ever really

be able to take Boucicault's place. The tradition had been safe and fixed in his hands, even though he struck a bad patch in December, 1919. He had built it and tried to guard it. Every conceivable detail of the production was always there in his head. He had known it from the beginning, and had done more for it than anyone else, except the man in whose mind it had been born. Yet these things happen in the theatre, too; and if Boucicault would never feel quite the same when December came round, it is true enough that the new audiences would never know quite what they had missed. This wasn't the end of the play or of its original producer. Yet it was the end of a long and very important chapter in both their lives.

Barrie was alone again for Christmas itself, having sent Michael and Nicholas off to Ramsgate with their old nurse. On Christmas Eve he entertained Bonar Law at the flat, and turned on his nephew, Willie Winter, to challenge and beat that master of the game at Chess. The next day he was once more entirely alone, for Brown and Mrs. Stanley had been told that they could go out. But he didn't mind. He smoked, thought, paced, and could look back on a year with a good deal of happiness in it and little that he would wish to forget. Or turning the other way, and looking forward, he could see at least three sets of rehearsals in the next few months.

The first, which began almost at once, was for the second London revival—not counting those all-star matinées—of *The Admirable Crichton*; which was going into the bill under the Vedrenne-Eadie management, at the Royalty Theatre in Dean Street. Dennis Eadie, the acting partner, as Crichton, and Miss Julia James, from the Gaiety, as Lady Mary. And a new ending, and several new touches, by the author. Ought he to have done this? The critics thought not. Crichton had become prophetic and patriotic about the recent war, and the ending—which had been altered so often eighteen years ago—was now softened and as some thought weakened from its original air of bitter and bracing truth. One didn't at all know this time whether the butler had abandoned his kingly characteristics or not; and the question rather arose as to whether even the author could take such liberties with his own work. However, he had, and it was almost inevitable that he should, for any such opportunity always tempted his pen; and the mood of 1920 was grafted—only obviously, it might be, to the older generation—on to the mood of 1902. 'In the official version, in the collected plays, we get something between the two. In any case, again, the revival, which opened on the last

day of January, was a considerable success, had an enthusiastic reception, and ran for four months.

Meanwhile, a decision had been reached about *Mary Rose*. This was finished by the beginning of the year and offered to Gerald du Maurier—back at Wyndham's again, and still at the top of the tree. He read it, it puzzled him almost as much as it attracted him, but though he was barely forty-seven now, and a year later wouldn't hesitate at the athletic ardours of Bull-dog Drummond, he was convinced at the moment that he was too old to play the younger manifestations of the double leading rôle. So Gerald made other plans, and Barrie—who, as we know, had already thought of this old home once before—offered it to the Haymarket instead. Still directed by Frederick Harrison. Still—though it was now more than twenty-two years since the *The Little Minister*—with the same Mr. Leverton, and his high collar, in the box-office. Still with its own tradition, and its own, special, and reliable public. And already connected with an actress who had played for him twice in recent revivals, and whom he strongly and correctly suspected of the qualities most needed now.

There was no hesitation this time. Harrison accepted it at once. Miss Fay Compton was engaged for the principal part. Robert Loraine, though only two or three years younger than Gerald, would play opposite her. And, as was announced early in March, the company would also include Miss Mary Jerrold, Miss Jean Cadell, Ernest Thesiger, Arthur Whitby, and Norman Forbes. No date was as yet given, but a second paragraph followed. Sir James Barrie, it was stated, had also written another short fantasy, *The Truth About the Russian Dancers*, "showing how they love, how they marry, how they are made, with how they die and live happily ever afterwards," which would be produced at the Coliseum on March 16th.

No less than ten typescript versions of this ballet-fantasy, in its one-act form, were discovered long afterwards in the wooden box that had once accompanied the author on his night journey from Dumfries to St. Pancras, and no one would like to say that these had been all. When he took it up again, he had worked on it and polished it with just as much care as he had given to *Mary Rose*, and in the end, though it was the oddest possible item even in a variety programme, it contained the essence of Barrie and the essence of the ballet as well. Charming, ridiculous, light, tender, and touch-

ing. An interpretation of the world of dancers as only one author could have seen it. And a very complete entertainment, with acting, dancing, music by Arnold Bax, and *décor* by Paul Nash, in itself. As was said before, its heroine never spoke. The exquisite Karsavina just danced her lines, as she fell in love, married, had a baby, died, and came to life again—all with a dream-like disregard for time and space. Even the ballet fanatics fell under its spell, for Barrie's words and story were in entire and flattering sympathy with the most mysterious of the arts. Music, we know, meant nothing to him, and no one had a keener eye for absurdity, but he had seen and made others see the Russian Ballet—just as he had once treated Pantaloon and his family—leading a consistent, preposterous, and unearthly life of their own. Delicious. And deliciously played by all concerned, though of course most particularly by his new star. A. B. Walkley gave it three-quarters of a column in *The Times* next day, and a whole column—sill gloating over the memory—on the day after that. A special and characteristic little success. 1920 was starting remarkably well, even for J. M. Barrie. And a few days later he was back at the Haymarket—but this time there was no platform over the orchestra-pit—for the first rehearsals of *Mary Rose*.

In the interval, and again during the earlier preparations, he was down at Brighton, where Freyberg was seriously ill with the aftermath of his innumerable wounds. More generosity here, if one may say so—and it is quite certain that one may. A tribute to heroism which mustn't be resisted, for it was as invincible as Freyberg's courage itself. Then longer and longer sessions in the theatre, with Michael and Nicholas very much in attendance; and Hardy, a guest at the flat on his last visit to London, taken along there too. The omens were still promising, and contained two more bits of luck. First, that Charles La Trobe, a former stage-manager here, had just returned in a more important capacity, and was as near being a second Boucicault as it was possible for anyone to be. And secondly that the Haymarket musical director, Norman O'Neill, had the same sort of affinity with magic in the Outer Hebrides that John Crook, at the Duke of York's, had once had with magic in a nursery and on another kind of island. As for the company, they were always a little bewildered, but every one of them was bewitched. Something that had seemed clear on one day would be inexplicable on the next. The time-changes were, of course, even more confusing at rehearsal. Sometimes a line seemed charged with mystic meaning, and then the

significance had suddenly slipped out of reach. But the ceriness held them from the earliest and roughest stage. They peered at the author, and his expression told them nothing; yet they felt that he, too, must have brought back bits of this play from some world beyond the moon.

Had he? Not exactly. He had run some enormously effective scenes together—though also some that were less so—and had steeped the whole thing in his own magic cauldron until the authentic flavour imbued almost every word. He had, as one might say, let himself go; though he had also, in another and simultaneous character, taken immense pains to cut, and dovetail, and compress. Yet just as in the same northern mythology there are fairy-women with exquisitely beautiful faces who are completely hollow when seen from behind, so in *Mary Rose* there is a tremendous frontal assault on the emotions, and hardly the pretence of any system of philosophy, either old or new, underneath. Not that this matters, or need matter, in the theatre. The magic was still there, and for three hundred and ninety-nine performances—beginning on Thursday, April 22nd—audiences wept, sniffed, swallowed, and choked, without ever being able to explain what had reduced them to this state. Being human, some of them still sought for a meaning, but it was never vouchsafed. For nobody knew it. The players certainly didn't, and the author had told everything by this time and had nothing more to say. He had followed another tremendous impulse, poured all his skill and art into it, and remained true to its guidance throughout. But *he* didn't know where his heroine had been, or why she had been taken, or the reason for her return. *He* didn't know where ghosts come from, nor the meaning, even for the purposes of this story, of life and death. His own affinity and familiarity with sadness had coloured an old legend, and an old idea that may be found in *The Little White Bird*, and the pen and his genius had done the rest. But though they had achieved something of a miracle, they could throw no light on it now. He was in an extraordinarily strong position for keeping yet another secret from his admiring public, for he didn't even know the answer himself.

Three hundred and ninety-nine consecutive performances, however, would beat everything, except *Walker, London*, that he had ever written, and no one could secretly have been more pleased about that. Again there were the inveterate victims in front, who wept, who came staggering out, and instantly tottered back towards

the box-office. Once more, after all that had happened in between, a Barrie play was packing the Haymarket from floor to roof. It ran right through the rest of 1920, and to the beginning of the following March. It was revived at the same theatre five years later, and again three years after that. It has been played all over the world, in any number of different languages, and has mystified and enchanted millions of human beings wherever curtains rise and fall. There has, of course, never been anything the least like it. And there never can be now.

The *Mary Rose* first night having come towards the end of the Easter holidays, or vacation, Barrie was unable to join Michael and Nicholas at the Welsh Lewises' this April. Though no one knew it, he had paid his last visit already, and now they had paid theirs. No cloud, however, in the sky as yet. The boys were back in time to see the completed and successful play. Nicholas was still revelling in Eton, and though Michael still looked back to his last year there as the happiest time in his life—even, it would seem, under that shadow of war—in his second year at Oxford there was plenty of friendship and fun. Barrie had given him a car. Barrie was still looking towards his brilliant future. And still consulting him over everything to do with his own work. To please Michael he was still making desperate efforts to finish his murder play, or to solve the mystery that he had set himself in its first and only act. But he couldn't. He had trusted to luck when he began it, more than ten years ago now; he had piled up perplexities, and hints, and what might or might not be clues, but he still didn't really know who the murderer was, and even Michael couldn't tell him. So the play was still called "The First Act," and an impossible inspiration still lagged.

It was to please Michael, also, or in obedience to his critical reproofs, that another work was abandoned altogether. "Mrs. Lapraik;" not to be confused with "The Fight for Mr. Lapraik," though the same queer surname was again associated with a story of dual personality. Not in a play this time. It was to have been, apparently, a shortish novel, in the first person; written as by an actress who was being haunted and driven out of her own life by the figure whom she had created on the stage. The fragment that survives rather fails in eeriness—partly, perhaps, because of the real author's sex, which as in all such attempts, is a constant handicap—and one can't say that Michael's opinion was wrong. It was an idea,



certainly. But it ought to have been written in some other way. Only now the author was discouraged, and it never was.

Not that he minded such discouragement. He valued it, and had relied on it or on its possibility from the start. For Michael had in a sense been entrusted with part of his own critical equipment. They must always collaborate now. Touching, interesting, and strange. Something else on its way now, too, though Barrie tried not to see it, and was wretched and miserable when he did. It wasn't that Michael was really changing, but of course he was developing, and who could hope that he would develop exactly or precisely as Barrie had dreamt and planned? He was nearly twenty now, with his own thoughts and his own circle of friends. And that isn't necessarily a happy age, even at Oxford, with a handsome allowance and your own car. Something was unsettling him. He was conscious of an oppression in all his guardian's care and love. He wanted the illusion of more independence. He wasn't at all sure that he wanted to stay on at Christ Church. He wanted to study drawing and painting in Paris.

Barrie was troubled and patient; but he was there in a father's place, and though a boy at this stage or phase might be just as difficult with a real father and give him just as much anxiety, the one who wasn't a real father could so easily take it much more to heart. He needed this boy's love also, more than anything on earth, and had known for years that he had it. But now, though he still only wanted to help him, he seemed to be shying away. It was making him wretched, too. That was obvious. Yet what was to be done? More patience; and perhaps it would all come right somehow, as so often still there were flashes of the old intimacy and comradeship. Yet even if age isn't always right, it still has the responsibility to try and protect, and guide, and guard. There was a promise also in this case, to himself and to the dead. Poor Barrie again. And this time poor Michael. Seven when his mother died; an orphan at under ten. So quick, and clever, and so extraordinarily attractive. But now so unhappy, too.

Age? What a word, it must suddenly seem, to have used for J. M. B. But he was sixty, this year, on the ninth of May. Cynthia, who had been taking on more and more of her old work again, came to dine with him on his birthday at the flat; the beginning of the long series of these special anniversary evenings. There was comfort here. She fitted in. She suited him. Even though there was adjust-

ment, and on both sides, at work all the time. But not too much. They argued sometimes, and one wonders whether Barrie ever really enjoyed argument; but for Cynthia it was always a necessary part of real friendship, and neither could do without such friendship now. They could tease as well as soothe each other, but the basis was growing firmer every day. And Barrie would always be proud of her beauty and background, and she of his gifts and fame. No doubt they were both possessive, and both defensive. But he had found a remedy for loneliness, and all this time he was entering with more and more intimacy into the life of her family, too. Truly she was no ordinary secretary. Though no one—not even Cynthia herself—could tell us all the characteristics that were hidden and revealed.

She was an authoress now, anyhow, among other things, and presently an editress of annuals and anthologies as well. Two literary jobs, then, one might say, as well as two domestic ones. There was a phase, one suddenly remembers, when she was contributing unsigned articles to a woman's page in *The Times*. Suddenly Barrie's own fingers itched, and another article, entitled *The private Private Secretary*, was slipped quietly in with the rest. If the real authorship had been spotted— But it wasn't. He was enchanted; for this was even better than the mock-parlourmaid. He had played a trick on the best-known newspaper in the world, and had proved that his hand was still as cunning as in the days of the *St. James's Gazette*. Puck again. Yet Puck, one sees, had a distinctly puckish assistant; who never, moreover, could really trespass on his own magic ground. This, no doubt, was quite an important point, too.

Sometimes, and more and more often as time went by, they paid visits together. At the end of May—this is still 1920—they, and Beb, were over in Ireland at the Dufferins'. In June they went down to the Hardys' at Max Gate. And then, in July, both Asquiths were guests at the flat; perhaps for the first time, but most certainly not for the last. Michael—his summer term over—was with friends in Scotland, and before any joint holiday could take place Nico must have his turn at the Public Schools' camp. Meanwhile, Barrie was back at the Haymarket, rehearsing a new hero—in the shape of Leon Quartermaine—for *Mary Rose*. He also encountered its heroine's brother. "I met Compton Mackenzie," says a letter to Elizabeth Lucas; "light trousers, grey silk hat, doggedly foppish, manner to match, face not matching, interesting, suffering face."

How's that for a glance and a summary? But of course he would always look twice, however carefully he concealed this, at any author.

There was a plan also just now which took up a good deal of thought and time. He had decided, on an impulse, to buy a cottage in Sussex, mainly if not entirely for the use of Michael and his friends. They were to spend their vacations there, with Michael as host, and what was to happen to it during the rest of the year hadn't quite been decided. It was a luxurious and generous idea, and he knew perfectly well what joy the same kind of possession would once have given the tenant of those house-boats; yet somehow, almost as soon as he had taken the first steps, he wanted to draw back. Perhaps Michael didn't jump at it eagerly enough, and there can be no doubt that solicitors and house-agents were most exasperating correspondents. But in any case, now that a cheque for four thousand pounds had been written, the cottage suddenly became "that confounded cottage," and the next stage was a rather awkward and difficult retreat. Moral: Beware of impulses. But he couldn't, even at sixty. He had seen a toy, as it were, in a shop-window, and had rushed in and bought it. Then he changed his mind, and had to pay again to get it taken back. He wanted to forget about it now. But if he saw another toy—and they were so seldom, if ever, for himself—he would do exactly the same sort of thing again.

The joint summer holiday, which began with a night journey on August 11th, and continued with a steamer and a motor-boat, was on a little island—Eilean Shona—at the entrance to Loch Moidart, off the north-west coast of Argyll. This tiny kingdom, and the very well-equipped house on it, had been lent by Lord Howard de Walden. A lonely, mountainous spot, with astonishing views of other islands, and cod-fishing in the almost invariably choppy sea. Elizabeth Lucas and Audrey were in the party, and some friends of the two boys. Fine weather, and a valiant but not wholly successful attempt to recapture the spirit of Amhuinnsuidh; for Barrie, now preparing *A Kiss for Cinderella* for publication, didn't really feel that he was working, and it was still work that made his own holidays happiest. And again, though Nicholas was quite obviously having the time of his life, Michael was still having difficult and bewildering moods. There was a sense of strain, in the midst of all the fishing and climbing, which sometimes came far too near a clash. The boy had no mother: that was always in Barrie's thoughts still,

as the beginning and end of this fresh load of care. He was fussed, and he couldn't help fussing. Michael, who had been so extraordinarily close to him, seemed to be struggling—if often almost in spite of himself—to get further and further away. Perhaps he was only growing up. Neither of them could avoid being himself. But though the darkest of all clouds was still nearly nine months away, it must seem even darker then from what was happening now.

Nico returned to Eton in the middle of September; Michael—out of college now, and in digs in St. Aldates—was at Oxford by the middle of October; and Barrie, with lumbago, was again alone, except for his secretary's visits, at the flat. Still no worth-while idea for a play, though *Mary Rose* was still running steadily at the Haymarket, and plans were now fixed for its production in New York. He had wanted Miss Adams again, who certainly couldn't have complained of the part; but she had been having some kind of dispute with the Frohman Company, and they couldn't come to terms. So Miss Ruth Chatterton—who would be another American Lady Babbie presently—stepped into the lead instead. While Tom Nesbitt, who had understudied Loraine and Quartermaine in London, was to go over, at Barrie's suggestion, and have his first big chance in the other big part. "Sad to me," says the author, alluding to Miss Adams's decision, though with no reflection on his new star. Yet at the same time it was now more than twenty-three years since the first Lady Babbie had done so much, on the same boards, for the beginning of all the American success. Time going faster than ever now. Notes, thoughts, letters, friends coming in, or asking him out; and here is December again.

We should know what that means well enough by now. *Peter Pan*, of course. But this time with its new manager, in the shape of Gilbert Miller—now suaddling the Atlantic almost like Frohman, but never with quite so tremendous a legend—and at the St. James's Theatre, or its third London home. Miss Edna Best as Peter. Henry Ainley in Gerald's old double rôle of Mr. Darling and Captain Hook. A special effort to tighten things up; not unsuccessfully, though even without the Lagoon scene—which was still omitted—Boucicault's old running time was exceeded by a quarter of an hour. But children were still being brought along in their scores and hundreds, and the Press notices seem to recognise a fresh and distinct air of new life. The sixteenth consecutive annual revival, or the seventeenth London *Peter Pan* in all. What a play. What a

property. And presently it would go off on tour again, still with a goodly number of the old pirates in their old parts.

The New York *Mary Rose* opened two days later, at the Empire Theatre, with rather divided opinions among the audience and Press. Certainly not a failure, with a run of a hundred and twenty-seven performances, followed by a far from unsuccessful tour. But in America there was rather too much natural speculation as to what it was all about. Though less so, for some reason, in the west than the east, there was often obvious bewilderment in the front of the house. It was in December, also, that *A Kiss for Cinderella* was published as the fifth volume of the uniform plays. While two more volumes, each consisting of one-act works, were already planned and in preparation for next year.

At Christmas Barrie was alone again, for Michael and Nicholas were spending it with Elizabeth Lucas in Paris. However, he didn't dine by himself this time, but as Freyberg's guest, with the King's Guard, at St. James's Palace. A highly successful evening; even though the innocent warriors let out that all their other invitations had been refused. The lonely Christmases, moreover, would be far less frequent from now on. His secretary, and his secretary's mother, would be seeing to that.

On January 6th, at his house in Hampstead—where Barrie had last dined with him just under a year ago—Dr. Alexander Whyte died at the age of all but eighty-five. His old friend, or his still older friend's brother, had passed through early and easy acceptance of his gifts to a phase of criticism, and thence to a final phase of deep and deserved admiration. He was moved, as he could only be moved by a feeling with its roots in Kirriemuir, and tried but failed to discover that first article that he had written for the *British Weekly*—thirty-three and a half years ago. He had quite thought that he would find it in *An Edinburgh Eleven*, and when he didn't, the same impulse made him take up his pen and write to Robertson Nicoll. Thus the second and sincerer tribute was in a letter which, but for Nicoll's biographer, might never have appeared in print. Between the lines there are memories of more than those thirty-three and a half years. They go back to the very beginning, and seem to show, already, how his native town was again tugging at his heart. He was busy still. He had a hundred lives in London, and a hundred reasons, no doubt, for delaying his return. But it

was calling. He had never forgotten it. He would be back there now when the summons became strong enough.

In the same month, or at the beginning of February, there were two short visits to Brighton, where Freyberg was again ill, and Barrie was again hovering and helping. E. V. Lucas was down there, too, and there was a good deal of fun at Harry Preston's hotel, and at their favourite oyster-shop, and on the Palace Pier. Then he was at Oxford, where Michael, to his enormous relief, seemed much more settled again. It was one of the times when they came very close together, and Barrie returned with a fresh sense of reward. It was going to be all right, he felt. Michael was working hard again, and planning a little reading-party for the Easter vacation. Whatever happened after Oxford, at least he was going to give it its full chance. A grateful thought for Elizabeth Lucas, who had known everything, and had helped both of them as only she could. And there was something else now that would interest her, too. Gerrie Davies was expecting a baby, to be born in June. A not wholly unjustifiable feeling that J. M. B. was about to become a grandfather.

As for work, he still reports that he "can't get going at anything," but he is busier than ever on that first act of the murder play. In fact, though it has been in and out of his mind since at least as far back as 1907, he still describes himself as writing it. He has now as good as given up all hope of ever finishing it, but if you're Barrie, that doesn't by any means imply that it will never be performed. If you're Barrie, you can apparently make a very special virtue of necessity, and even get others to see it in the same light. Could anyone else consider the production of a play that he can't finish, or would anyone be found to produce it if he did? Yet already there are plans in this case, and presently there will even be competition to put this strange fragment on the stage.

On February 22nd there was another big charity matinée at the Coliseum, in which, among many items, Albert Chevalier and no other than Mme. Karsavina, in her second Barrie part, appeared "for one consecutive performance only" in a revival of *Pantaloone*. Four days later *Mary Rose* ended its long run. It was still doing such business that in the old days it would almost certainly have finished the season. But times were changing, costs were still rising, and even the Haymarket had to face the new order of things. The tours had already set out, though, and were doing remarkably well.

The note-book—with its left-handed writing getting clearer and

clearer now—shows titles, but hardly more, for new plays. "Play on the life of Robert Burns." "The Man Who Couldn't Grow Up, or The Old Age of Peter." That's rather a sad one. "The Mortal Blow." Mysterious, ominous, reappearing again and again, but never expanded or elucidated beyond that. The play about an actor also recurs, but with Nelson Keys now substituted for Gerald, and some very odd notions, from Barric of all people, about the disadvantages of his miniature size. But running through all these, and filling many more pages, are constant notes for his rectorial address.

It was overdue, in a sense, already, if he were ever going to give it at all; for already the students who had elected him were leaving St. Andrews and going out into the world. It hung over him, tempting him, and at the same time burdening him with a feeling of tremendous responsibility. Almost for the first time he would have to speak as himself, and not through the mouths of others; but though he had a great deal to say, and was fully conscious of his right to say it, he was determined not to preach. Youth and Age; that was the text in his mind; their rivalry, what they could learn from each other, and how ultimately they must always be on opposite sides. Titles here, too. "Success." "Good-bye." "The Spring of the Year." We see now where they were all heading, and there is even a note already—for he can't keep autobiography out of it—of "an imaginary writer who is really myself." His name—spelt like that at present—is MacConachie. "Admit that had to make this man up, because never could give own opinions." Thus the speech on Courage is slowly beginning to take shape. But it won't be delivered—because of what must happen first—for more than another year.

It was in the present year—1921—that the first of his plays was put on the still silent screen. *The Admirable Crichton*, altered almost out of recognition by an American producer, and re-named, typically and preposterously, *Male and Female*. He had nothing to do with this, except to take his very large fee, and was pretty well disgusted by what he eventually saw. But though he had mocked at films already, of course they fascinated him. He never could see any form of entertainment without instantly analysing it and wondering what he could have made of it himself. He must have slipped into thousands of cinemas in his time—though he had to abandon one of the nearest to the Adelphi, because the manager

recognised him and tried to put him on the free list; and he had a succession of favourite film-stars—though here again it was a point of honour that he should deny all knowledge or memory of their names. So that now, when *Peter Pan* was also sold to an American film company, and they wanted him to go over and help to produce it, he refused at once, but offered to send them his own script.

This still exists. Twenty thousand words of the most carefully rewritten scenario, with all the sub-titles, and a mass of fresh visual detail which to anyone but a film producer and his attendant experts must surely have seemed like a gift from Heaven. It's authentic, it comes from the one and only source of the saga, who took enormous trouble over it, and never forgot for one moment the special medium for which it was meant. But of course the producer and his experts knew better. They wanted, apparently, to put the play, rather than this delicious and characteristic version of it, on the screen; and this in the end was what they tried to do. The Barrie scenario may be languishing somewhere in Hollywood still; but they didn't want it, and now that the silent film is unfortunately as dead as the dodo, there seems little chance that it will ever be seen. A great pity, and a considerable disappointment to the author; for the version which finally reached London at the end of 1925 was always, for him, the wrong kind of success. He reverted to detachment, and one recalls that he wouldn't even go round to the Tivoli—a mere step from his own front door—to see the talking picture of *The Little Minister* ten years after that.

On March 1st, in this spring of 1921, he gave another banquet, in his own establishment, for the American Ambassador—John William Davis—and his wife, to both of whom he was very much attached. Cynthia and Beb Asquith were there, Sir Squire Bancroft, E. V. Lucas, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lady Dufferin, and Mrs. Raymond Asquith; on the last of which names we again have to pause. Wife for nine years, until his death in action, of Beb's brilliant and much-loved elder brother. Daughter of Sir John and Lady Horner, at whose lovely home at Mells, in Somerset, Barrie will soon be staying again and again. And with two daughters and a son of her own. She was another who must always tower over him, but if anyone thinks this was a drawback, they are quite wrong. There was always a special form of admiration for women who were tall. This would become a particular friendship, bringing him much happiness, and her an unending supply of kindness and watchful wisdom. It



would be one of his unfailing treats to take her out to dinner, or to offer her some personal and personally-chosen gift; and with a faint smile she played her own part, for she understood and was touched. Her children, too, must come into it, but chiefly her son; another boy for Barrie to charm, to visit at his school, and to flatter—though partly, of course, for his mother's sake—with the autograph manuscript of an unpublished work. A detective story, written for him and no one else. The writer knew well enough the value attaching to such a tribute. It would be part of the point, at the moment, that the reader shouldn't. But of course there would always be someone else to see that it was safely kept.

Add Katharine Asquith, then, to the inner circle, as it still expands but still can only be entered with a true copy of the secret key.

Easter fell at the end of March this year, and Barrie spent it as a guest, for the first time, at the Gloucestershire home of Lord and Lady Wemyss. At beautiful, golden Stanway, once the summer residence of the Abbots of Tewkesbury, nestling at the foot of the Cotswolds, with its gables, its hall with that vast oriel window, its Jacobean garden front, and its exquisite gatehouse by Inigo Jones. With its church, its tithe-barn of incredible size and antiquity, and its wide, grass terraces ascending to the Pyramid—or in other words, the summer-house—at the top of the hill. Property, after the dissolution of the monasteries, of the Tracy family, and passing, through them, to an ancestor of its present owner. A house with a tremendous legend and atmosphere, and filled to overflowing with the taste and spirit of its kind, and clever, and adored hostess.

The new visitor sank into it with enthusiasm and enormous satisfaction at once. At once, also, he began picking up its public and private history, exploring its surroundings—though he knew some of them already, for it was only five miles from Broadway—and adding his own interpretation to everything that he saw. If it was the house of his dreams, there was perhaps no particular distinction in that, for everyone who saw it fell instantly under its spell. Nevertheless, its intimately English essence found the deepest response in the heart of its latest guest, and now it will always be associated with him, which is exactly what he would have wished.

Stanway and Barrie. Barrie and Lady Wemyss. Lady Wemyss and Stanway. They can't be separated in one's thoughts now. They all continued to influence each other, though all had such distinct and vivid lives of their own. Easter, 1921. That was the real beginning of it. And the beginning, also, for one of them of what became almost his favourite of all indoor games.

In that large, high hall—which still has several postage-stamps on its ceiling—there was a refectory table nearly eight yards in length. It ran along one wall of the room, with benches on either side of it. At one end two lines had been scored across it, while just below and beyond them there was a wide, shallow tray. Proceeding to the other extremity, and armed with a number of heavy, metal disks, you were required, in the game of Stanway shuffleboard, to send them gliding along the dark, polished surface so that they rested, if possible, between the second line and the edge of the table just beyond it. Or if you failed at this, you could still score—but not so highly—by making them stop between the two lines. It was the easiest thing in the world, of course—if you hadn't the eye and the knack—to go shooting into the tray, to stop half-way up the table, or to send your disk hurtling off sideways on to the floor.

But for left-handed J. M. B., with his wrist and its rare judgment, these were naturally challenges that must be met at once. He flung himself into the new pastime, playing against the host and his brother for large sums of money, and instantly developed an almost diabolical skill. His disks never crashed on to the floor, while no rival's disk was ever safe at the far end until he had played his last shot. He revelled in it. He had almost to be wrenched from the table. And night after night, either as a guest or presently as a tenant and host, he exhibited the same skill, the same cunning, and the same insatiable eagerness for one more game. Barrie and Shuffleboard. Inseparable now, also. One mustn't say, for it wouldn't be true, that this was all that drew him to Stanway. But at least it was one of the most powerful attractions for sixteen more years.

From Stanway, as the Easter house-party broke up, he went on, this year, to the little inn at Corfe Castle, in Dorset, where Michael and another undergraduate were reading for their final schools. A few, very happy days here, and then back, to welcome Nico, at the flat. But Michael was soon back in London, too. This was the month of yet another of the innumerable post-war strikes—a coal

strike this time—the Government was increasing its defence forces, and he spent the rest of the emergency as a private in the London Scottish, in camp on Wimbledon Common. The main, actual excitement at the flat was his striking and glorious appearance in a kilt.

A few days later, in the middle of April, Barrie was very much saddened by the death, after a short, sharp illness, of his friend, host, and guest, Hugh Lewis, at his home in Wales. The snapping of a link that had lasted less than ten years, but a close one almost from the beginning. Hugh Lewis had no subtleties; his many virtues were all straightforward and on the surface; but he stood for Barrie as the perfect father—so much so that even a father, in this case, was exalted almost to the greater height—and as the joint centre of a family circle from which he always drew comfort and help. No break with the others now. They go on, always on the same terms of very special affection, until the final page. But at the moment there could be no thought of intruding on their grief, and afterwards—so soon afterwards—it was a house to which he just felt that he could never bear to return. For him, with all those memories of happiness, it had become a haunted house by then.

May 9th. His sixty-first birthday. Michael and Nicholas back at Oxford and Eton. A quiet evening, with his secretary to dinner of course, at the flat. Two days later they set off together to spend a night with the Hardys at Max Gate. The Famous Dog Wessex—as his owner described him on his tombstone—the wire-haired terrier with the subsequent passion for wireless, proved a slight strain to the guests at dinner, by walking about on the table and taking their food. But afterwards Hardy read poetry aloud, and Wessex was subdued. Next morning they all visited the hero's birthplace at Higher Bockhampton—or "Egdon Heath" in the novels—the little cottage which Barrie loved to describe; though always for some reason—perhaps to increase the listener's awe and veneration for Hardy—as if he had been born in a palace himself. They found it shut. But they also found a couple of rickety ladders, and while Cynthia held them together, Barrie ascended, managed to open the window of the hallowed birth-chamber, scrambled through it, and so let the others in. "Very happy visit," says the secretary's diary, to which the biographer will henceforth be rather more indebted than he can possibly say.

Back to London, and to rehearsals. *Shall We Join the Ladies?*—

named at last—had gone to no ordinary management, new or old, but was to have a very special *première*, none the less. The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, the seminary for stage aspirants which had developed out of Tree's old school of acting, and had been directed for twelve years now by the Vanbrughs' brother, Kenneth Barnes, had built itself a new theatre in Gower Street. Obviously an opportunity for no ordinary opening, and the chance wasn't missed. On May 27th it was to offer a triple bill of more than scintillating attractions. Part One, the first act of *Trelawney of the Wells*, with a cast of distinguished ex-students. Part Two, *The Man in the Dock*, a professional skit by present members of the Academy. And Part Three, *Shall We Join the Ladies?*, the first act of a play by J. M. Barrie, with such a terrific constellation that justice can only be done to it by printing it in full. So here it is.

Sam Smith (the host)  
 Lady Jane Raye  
 Mr. Preen  
 Lady Wrathie  
 Sir Joseph Wrathie  
 Mrs. Preen  
 Captain Jennings  
 Mrs. Castro  
 Mr. Vaile  
 Mrs. Bland  
 Mr. Gourlay  
 Miss Isit  
 Miss Vaile  
 An Officer  
 Lucy (a maid)  
 Dolphin (a butler)

Mr. Dion Boucicault  
 Miss Fay Compton  
 Mr. Charles Hawtrey  
 Miss Sybil Thorndike  
 Mr. Cyril Maude  
 Lady Tree  
 Mr. Leon Quartermaine  
 Miss Lillah McCarthy  
 Mr. Nelson Keys  
 Miss Madge Titheradge  
 Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson  
 Miss Irene Vanbrugh  
 Miss Maric Löhr  
 Mr. Norman Forbes  
 Miss Hilda Trevelyan  
 Mr. Gerald du Maurier.

One sees from this astonishing list that the occasion wasn't only a tribute to the R.A.D.A., but to the author as well. The very cream of the profession had united to take part in his unfinished work; though its large and almost equally important set of characters would suggest to several critics that it had been written for this particular occasion. They were wrong, of course. It had been written with no such company in the author's mind, and it was unfinished because he couldn't finish it. But for all that, it was a

most admirable vehicle for sixteen theatrical stars, and its one performance would of course attract exceptional interest and attention. Once more, then, Barrie and Gerald—for Gerald was the producer—were directing rehearsals together, though on a stage that was new to them both. Once more, also, the players were creeping up to the former, and begging him to expound the mystery of his plot. They may have been doing so eight days before the opening performance, or on Thursday, May 19th. But they wouldn't be seeing him again after that. For on the afternoon of this day Michael Davies and another undergraduate were bathing together in Sandford Pool, just outside Oxford. Michael, who could hardly swim at all—he had a fear of water, though he had always tried to hide and conquer it—suddenly found himself out of his depth and in difficulties. His friend tried to save him, it was believed, and was dragged down. A man from the neighbouring paper-mill saw what was happening, and threw in a life-belt; but it was too late. Both the bathers had disappeared by now, and both of them were drowned.

Michael, the elder of the two, would have been twenty-one in just another four weeks.

For some reason no message reached Barrie in London. He was at home that evening, writing to Michael, as he still wrote daily whenever they were apart, and late in the evening took the letter down with him in the lift to post it. In the hall a stranger stopped him. Raised his hat, said he was from a newspaper, and asked if Sir James could oblige him with a few more facts. It was in this horrible, and to Barrie this quite unspeakable manner that the news was first broken. He turned away and went up in the lift again. He telephoned to Peter, to Cynthia, and to Sir Douglas Shields—his friend also, now, for a number of years—and they all came round, as did Gerald du Maurier, and did what they could to see him through the rest of the night. But as yet he was almost beyond help. The Mortal Blow had fallen. It had struck where there was no defence. Pride and hope lay shattered, as he walked endlessly and silently to and fro. There was no reason this time; no comfort, as when George had gone. This was sheer, black, intolerable cruelty, aimed at his very heart.

He never got over it. It altered and darkened everything for the rest of his life. The genius inside him—that burden and gift—would still express itself; sometimes almost against his wish. It would draw him before the public again, and in a new phase—as an established

and conscious orator—that would only begin next year. He would laugh again, sometimes, and be funny again; and make friends; and develop that overwhelming and possessive interest in other lives. He would still watch himself, and still be fascinated to discover what the gift or burden was going to do next. He hadn't left off being Barrie, for this was the one thing that he could never do. But there were new and deeper lines in his face already. The wound that was dealt him on that fatal day was one that could never heal.

## 22

Michael's coffin—brought back by Peter after the inquest—lay there in the flat, and on the Monday he was buried, as his parents and grandparents had been, in the churchyard of Hampstead Parish Church. No praise or gratitude can possibly be too great for Cynthia during these days. She spared herself nothing. She gave out everything. She shouldered an insupportable weight with faith and courage that must never be forgotten when this part of the tragic story is told. It may be said—and, indeed, it must be said—that it was she who preserved his reason, for throughout that almost unimaginable week-end there were moments of terrible danger.

She hung on, lending her strength and somehow providing a background of calm, as the secret battle swayed to and fro. Never did he come nearer to being beaten, for who could comfort the one who had comforted so many? And yet there was his own strength, the inheritance from his own beginnings, still there as an ultimate and hidden reserve. It was impossible that he should go on giving way for ever. There was still an inner rock there when grief got down to it.

Yet grief seemed personified—if not for the first or last time—at Michael's funeral. Then his secretary and her husband led him away. Their children were staying down at Margate, and there they, and Barrie, and presently Nico as well, joined them. The other Michael was seven this summer; little Simon would be two in August. Barrie could always hide his sorrows from children, and it was still very difficult for him not to play with any little boys whom he met. The nights were still the worst part for him—one must remember that he had been a bad sleeper for years now, and

would never be a good one again—but in the day-time, during that week at Margate, he could even smile now, to make these children laugh. Cynthia still watching, but a little easier. It did no harm, of course, that *Shall We Join the Ladies?* was received, according to all reports, with enthusiasm, and was treated, indeed, as no such fragment can ever have been treated before. This was unquestionably a help to the author too.

But there was very little history during the next two months. He hardly went anywhere, and saw only a few of his closest friends—who must still always wonder, as they stepped back into the lift, whether they hadn't made matters worse. No work to speak of; apart from an introduction—as an act of professional piety—to the comedies of Harold Chapin, a playwright killed in the war; and some polishing and proof-reading for two more uniform volumes of one-act plays of his own. The rectorial address, which must involve facing an audience, was again, and as it now seemed indefinitely, postponed. At the beginning of July there was another brief visit to Margate, this time with Charles Whibley as well. But he was still looking backward rather than forward; and though he knew that Michael had sometimes blamed him—as a boy might, and as this boy could—for letting ideas lie fallow too long, it would have been a blank impossibility to sit down and plan anything yet. He was thinking, it is true, and would go on thinking of writing something about Michael himself; but this, also, he put off, and continued to put off, and for the present there would only be a few pages of very private notes.

All his own, old letters, dating from that first half at Eton, had come back to him, and they always remained in his desk. But he could neither destroy them nor read them. A touching impulse made him write to the dead boy's friends, inviting them to drop in at the flat whenever they were passing or in the mood. But of course they didn't. They were anything but heartless, but they were realists, and hardly as courageous as all that. He would have done it himself, if they had changed places, and would have gone on doing it as long as he was let in. But then he was always the exception, and they—mercifully, perhaps, for all concerned—behaved as one might expect.

At the end of July—ostensibly for Nico, but in fact quite as much and, as it turned out, as propitiously for himself—he rented Stanway, while the owners moved, as usual at this time of year, to Scotland.

If one sees the secretary's hand in this, and a method of providing a country holiday for her husband and children in her own old home, then one also sees that it was so much the less holiday for herself. She was the *châtelaine*, now, and hostess, and during the five and a half weeks' tenancy she was not only a wife, mother, and secretary, but the organiser of hospitality for a gathering of sometimes oddly-assorted guests as well. These included Mr. and Mrs. Winter—the host's brother-in-law and sister; Jack and Gerrie Davies, with Timothy, their two-months'-old son; E. V. Lucas; Charles Whibley; Sir Walter Raleigh—whose last summer this was to be—with his wife and daughter; Hugh Macnaghten; Mrs. Raymond Asquith; Lady Guendolen Osborne, afterwards Lady Guendolen Cecil, a very greatly loved friend; and—among others, as they say—Mr. and Mrs. Charles Scribner. Barrie himself was present in at least three different characters. As an ordinary host; as an extraordinary host, not always entirely distinguishable from Lob; and as a kind of guest—though he happened to be paying the rent—himself.

In the first manifestation he sat at the head of the dinner-table, and was as charming and courteous as only he could be. In the second he would suddenly have vanished, or would issue odd and tyrannical orders which must instantly be obeyed. While in the third he threw off all responsibility, explored the neighbourhood, watched the village cricket matches, had long talks with Lord Wemyss's old coachman, and played endless games with Michael and Simon Asquith. In other games—golf-croquet, shuffleboard, and cricket on the lawn—the two latter manifestations were more mixed. It was quite clear, for instance, that they were principally for his own enjoyment and relaxation, but it was he who must choose the times and teams, and insist on the most rigorous application of his own rules. Golf-croquet must be played immediately after lunch, for he was ready now, and the others could digest or not. Lawn cricket—there is a remarkable memory, this August, of Barrie and Walter Raleigh, who was six-foot seven, rushing past each other on the pitch—must always be after tea. And shuffleboard, followed sometimes by Shakespearian readings in which all, if bidden, must take part, was essential after dinner.

On August 11th—but the author had only looked in at one or two rehearsals—Frederick Harrison revived *Quality Street*, with Miss Fay Compton and Leon Quartermaine, at the Haymarket. Nearly nineteen years since its first London production. The second revival,



but far more successful than the one in the autumn of 1913. Three hundred and forty-four performances this time; helped, undoubtedly, by the recent long run of *Mary Rose*. It filled the theatre, in other words, until the beginning of the following June. But just as the author had once been unable to control some of Seymour Hicks's high spirits in this play, so he discovered, when he visited it in October, that liberties were again being taken with the text. The audience didn't know or mind, but the author left his box half-way through, and wasn't seen there again. Quite right, though once more these things are bound to happen in the theatre. They don't happen in cinemas. But other things do; and no one can have the best of both these fantastic worlds, even if he is J.M.B.

*Quality Street*, by the way, had been turned into a musical comedy in America, earlier this year, under the title of *Phoebe*. The original author, however, had no share in this, and its fate merely represented an almost unnoticeable disappointment in the matter of fees. Gross income, which had soared a couple of years ago—by the sale of film-rights—to well over fifty-thousand pounds, would still all but touch thirty-eight thousand by the end of 1921.

The outstanding feature, perhaps, of the first summer holiday at Stanway was a Sunday visit by the greater part of the Australian Test team, who were here for the first full-dress series of matches since the war. They were playing at Cheltenham, about ten miles away, and were all heroes for Barrie and Lucas, though again there was some pretence that the invitation had been issued to please Nicholas. At any rate, they came over before lunch, stayed till after dinner, and were of course made to play all the current games. They were also photographed, in a large group, with Barrie in the centre holding little Timothy Davies in his arms. Furthermore, as was fully intended, they enjoyed themselves enormously. Any reader who has never had the good fortune to meet an Australian Test cricketer, yet has inevitably noticed the number of columns devoted to them in the Press, might fall into the error of supposing them to be swollen-headed, or at least a little tinged with athletic conceit. Strangely enough, these qualities are extremely rare. Flattery and publicity roll off the majority of their sunburnt skins without the faintest visible effect. And though Barrie, also, would have spoilt them if he could, this was beyond even his powers.

So there they were, exchanging charm with him, admiring Stanway, playing golf-croquet, and lawn cricket, and shuffleboard, yet

still being happily, and gloriously, and contentedly themselves. In the dusk they departed, for more cricket was awaiting them in the morning, and then they proceeded on their extensively-advertised tour. The vast and invincible Warwick Armstrong; Gregory, Macdonald, Mailey, and the impish Oldfield—these were some of the ones who came over to Stanway that first time. But as chance would have it, the one who afterwards developed into the greatest friend and hero of all—C. G. Macartney—was otherwise occupied on this particular day. Five years before the next English series, but he will be here again, and the friendship will really start. Barrie will be sixty-six then, but that will make no difference. There will still be magic for C. G. Macartney, as he steps almost straight into the freedom of the flat. And Barrie will envy, and admire, and understand, and—if you can believe it—be understood. For he will be simple himself now. He will forget to be silent, or frightening, or morbid, or depressed. There seems to be something, after all, in the game that he has chosen as the best in the world. No wonder he loved it, when even the magician could rest in the strength of its spell.

The Stanway holiday ended on September 6th, though his secretary—now the daughter of the house again—remained behind. Nicholas went on to stay with school-friends, but Freyberg—in better health again, after a voyage to New Zealand—was once more a guest at the flat. Still no work, and a great access of general listlessness after the effort, as it now seemed, of the long house-party. But an evening to which even Barrie looked forward, at the Garrick Club, on September 16th.

This was the month when Charles Spencer Chaplin—Charlie, to countless millions—paid that extraordinarily mob-ridden visit to the land of his birth. The war, and since the war his enchanting film of *The Kid*, together with the full development of this hitherto unexampled method of achieving world-wide fame, had made him the best-known and far and away the most popular actor on earth. His arrival in London had blocked all the traffic from Waterloo Station to the Ritz. Crowds waited in Piccadilly, by day and night, in the hope of merely seeing him come in or go out. Wherever he went, unless the most extraordinary precautions were taken, more crowds sprang up and swarmed round him at once. It must have been a fairly ghastly experience for a sensitive and extremely sensible

man. But at that time, and with his genius, it was apparently inevitable. He survived it, and of course he was touched by it, though he must have been pretty glad to make his final escape.

He could also, of course, have dined anywhere in London by expressing the very faintest wish. But on September 16th he chose—and looked forward to it, too—to dine at the Garrick, on the invitation of E. V. Lucas, to meet some of his host's friends. Sir Squire Bancroft was there, Sir George Frampton, Harry Graham, Walter Hackett, Edward Knoblock, Barrie, and—as a particularly glorious conclusion to his school holidays—Nico Davies. The guest of honour has told the story of this evening in his book, *My Trip Abroad*, and makes it quite clear to what he had been looking forward most. He wanted to meet Barrie, and he wasn't disappointed. They sat side by side at dinner, and naturally took to each other at once. Barrie talked about his films, and suggested—whether on an impulse or otherwise—that the guest should play Peter Pan. The guest was overwhelmed, though there is probably no part that he couldn't play if he tried, and changed the subject. But he was still fascinated; and so was J.M.B. He stole that guest. He took him, and Knoblock, back to the flat afterwards, and they talked until three o'clock in the morning, being joined during the session by Gerald du Maurier. Barrie repeated the suggestion about *Peter Pan*, and undoubtedly meant it by this time, though as we all know it never came to pass. A memorable night up there in the big study, as the two heroes poured out their thoughts about acting and plays. Chaplin noticed everything, remained flattered throughout, and seems to have been quite unconscious that he was giving just as much pleasure as he received. The boy from the South London slum and the boy from the cottage in Kirriemuir were happy together, and may be envied for once without a thought of the burdens that they also bore. It was their one meeting, but it was a vast and complete success. What, when one thinks of Barrie and Charlie Chaplin, can be pleasanter to record than that?

"I notice," the visitor's story ends—and one has to admit that the host shrivelled slightly when the words appeared in print; "I notice that Barrie looks rather tired and worn, so we leave, walking with du Maurier up the Strand. He tells us that Barrie is not himself since his nephew was drowned, that he has aged considerably . . ." And so—but it must be so—there is a last note of tragedy even here. But of truth, also. Gerald was right. There had been a

flash and a splash at Stanway, but Barrie was still stricken by the force of that blow.

After Nico had left him, he went over for a few days' visit to Elizabeth Lucas, who was now living in Paris. That was always good for him. Then he returned, as a guest now, to Stanway, and observed and approved some feudal revelry in honour of a family wedding; for already there was a feeling, on both sides, that he should be present at anything in the way of an occasion. Back to the flat again, with Charles Whibley as the guest now. And then, when he left, Cynthia and Bebe moved in again for about a couple of months, as was often the custom now when their own house was let. Towards the end of October another old friend, Turley Smith, the Allahakbarrie, arrived from Cornwall to stay a few nights. No doubt he was told all about the Australians, for cricket was still the centre of existence for him, too. Barrie used to send him long, close-of-play telegrams when important matches were on, until the arrival of broadcasting brought this pleasant practice to an end.

On October 30th a still older friend and earlier playmate, H. B. Marriott Watson—a widower now for ten years—died at his house at Shere. Grenville Street. The house-boat at Tagg's Island. *Richard Savage*. All those distant and preposterous cricket matches. . . . They had seen but little of each other lately; Barrie had reached the heights; and Marriott Watson, with all his output, had attained only moderate success. But the link had been close and strong once, and there were many memories now.

Then, at the beginning of November, we come to the strange and extraordinarily occult affair of Barrie's part in the negotiations which led, a month later, to the signing of the Irish Treaty. They had been going on, more or less secretly, since the middle of September, and as this isn't a political history, the full story must be sought elsewhere. Yet now, suddenly, it was Barrie who was breakfasting and lunching with the Prime Minister, dining with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and having long, private conversations with Michael Collins at the flat. Not so private that he didn't drop a considerable number of baffling hints, and when the Treaty was signed there were further suggestions of his own mysterious share. No doubt it was slight enough, for Mr. Lloyd George is now quite unable to throw any light on it at all. Yet at the moment there were two powerful points for Barrie; first, a mixture of anxiety and

exhilaration as he sped to and fro behind the scenes, and secondly an immediate and tremendous admiration for Collins. And that's much less mysterious; for whatever one may think of his revolutionary activities, he was extraordinarily attractive and astonishingly brave. Braver than ever at this period, when he was working, with so little encouragement from his own supporters, to extinguish the flames which he had lit. In the following March, when he was over in London again, he made a point of returning to the flat, and again there was the warmest exchange of sympathy and understanding, though he was thirty years younger than his host and had led such a remarkably different life. Friendship here, with roots to it now. But that was their last meeting. In August of 1922 Michael Collins was ambushed by his own countrymen and shot through the head. His work was finished, though peace in Ireland might still be long delayed. Barrie placed his memory in another niche, and kept it there. Looked back to November of 1921, and still felt that he had played his own part. But of course was really no more of a professional politician than before.

Immediately after this excursion into secret statecraft he was down at Stanway again, and in the same month, accompanied by Nicholas on long leave from Eton, he spent a week-end—not for the first or last time—with Lord and Lady Lytton at Knebworth. Their elder son, Antony, was now one of Nico's closest friends; there were other Etonians in the house; there was Miss Megan Lloyd George; and there were charades.

How on earth have we omitted to mention them before? They were Barrie's passion at this epoch, and for a long while afterwards; though again, of course, it was essential that he should be in the right mood. When this came, he put his whole heart and soul into them; going to the length of writing out scenarios the night before, and when taking to the drawing-room boards himself, exhibiting an immense gallery of striking, and funny, and life-like impersonations. He could still play like this, and what an actor he still was. He could be terrifying, too, when he chose, though he had now practically abandoned that rendering of *The Bells*. But Nico, with an uncle by this time at the head of the real profession, wasn't to be sneezed at, either. A very strong team these two, when the spirit of charades took hold of them. While the versatile secretary was well-equipped for her own contributions to this other great game.

There was a still more public appearance—though the star wasn't aware of it at first—at the beginning of December. Peering out of his eyrie at about two o'clock in the morning, Barrie suddenly noticed a spot on the Embankment bursting into a blaze of light. He was bewildered for a moment, and then, as the explanation dawned on him—that a cinema outfit was at work—he put on his hat, scarf, and coat, took his walking-stick, and descended for closer inspection. A news-reel organisation was taking scenes of London by Night, and arcs and camera swung on Barrie as he refreshed himself at a coffee-stall. Somebody recognised him, or his image when the film was developed; and the next thing, of course, wasn't only his appearance on the screen, but in a static version in the illustrated Press. The caption-writers decided that it was his habit to prowling about the streets and patronise coffee-stalls in the small hours, and another rather inaccurate story passed into the body of the legend. The only truth, of course, was the underlying and unstated essence that he was now a very poor sleeper, and generally sat up, even when he was alone, until long after midnight, in order to shorten the wakeful hours in bed.

A further unrecorded result of this particular outing was that he again caught a cold, which turned into another three weeks of bronchitis. His secretary arranged for Bernard Freyberg to come and stay—who slept with a string round his wrist so that the patient could pull it, if necessary, in the night—and presently there was a nurse as well. One of the worse and more alarming bouts, and a very impatient patient. He wouldn't do what he was told, had a relapse, and then insisted on getting up and going out to the second representation of *Shall We Join the Ladies?*, which was given on December 19th at the Palace Theatre as part of a matinée for King George's Pension Fund. All-star again, of course, and with the same cast as in May, except that Cyril Maude and Miss Marie Löhr were replaced by Dennis Eadie and Miss Gladys Cooper. This was the first time that the author saw it.

But he was still pretty ill, and had missed the *Peter Pan* rehearsals at the St. James's—with Ernest Thesiger as Hook this time, and Miss Joan Maclean as Peter—as well as its first night. His secretary, however, having failed to induce him to enter a nursing-home, now risked a change of tactics and just managed to get him down to Stanway for Christmas. The risk was justified. He cheered up and began feeling better at once. And on Boxing-Day there was a fillip

from the Fount of Honour which did him all the good in the world. A letter arrived offering him the Order of Merit.

This was, and still is, something worth having; even though Cynthia hadn't apparently heard of it, and E. V.'s congratulatory message described it as "so damned final." Even, moreover—but only just, at that moment—when the new O.M. discovered that he must attend an investiture in knee-breeches. Yet now he had followed both Meredith and Hardy, which was another special source of satisfaction and pride. He was elated, and said so. The Fount had chosen well, and there was a great deal of public affection and approval when the news was announced—together with that of a knighthood for Gerald du Maurier—on January 1st. Next day there was a column in *The Times*—"a nice article, which startled some people as is appeared on the obituary page"—by an anonymous contributor, summing up what nearly everybody must have felt. To wit, or in other words, that no prefix or suffix could ever explain him so well as the "Etcetera" which now, for the sake of convenience, generally took the place of the academic honours after his name. "Therein," says the writer, "lies all the unknown, the possible, the incredible, the impossible, and therefore probable, that make up so much of Sir James Matthew Barrie, Bt., etc., as the world has been allowed to see." And now that, in these pages, the world has been allowed to see something more, it is still, as the biographer is so well aware, the "etcetera" which must continue to elude his own pen.

1922. Back in the flat by the beginning of January, with "the loyal Freyberg" still for another ten days as guard and guest. A weekend at Brighton, with Beb, Cynthia, and Katharine Asquith. A visit from the Winters. A little playgoing again, as a sign of returning health and strength; to Milne's new play, *The Truth About Blayds*, which he both enjoyed and admired; and to a matinée of *Peter Pan*, with Simon Asquith—still barely two and a half—as his favoured and enchanted guest. Plans, also, now, for *Shall We Join the Ladies?* to go into a regular bill. Messrs. Alec Rea and Basil Dean, who called themselves "Reandean, Ltd.," had been in management together at the St. Martin's Theatre for about a couple of years, and having had one big Galsworthy success in *The Skin Game* were now preparing to produce *Loyalties* early in March. They wanted to add the Barrie fragment, which already, after its two special perform-

ances, had aroused a good deal of public interest and curiosity; and so they did in the end, though at first the author had a strong feeling that two such different crime-plays were hardly suitable for the same programme.

One can't say that he was wrong, either, in theory, or on the assumption that any audience isn't glad to be given all the entertainment that it can get. But *Loyalties*, it was thought, was too short by itself, and Galsworthy was the last to make difficulties in this or any other case. So Barrie yielded, even though it were to temptation, and the two plays went into rehearsal together—under Basil Dean's punctiliously detailed direction—and with Leslie Faber in Boucicault's original part. The first night was on Wednesday, March 8th; Barrie was present with his secretary, her husband, and Elizabeth Lucas, and there was a duplicate and triumphant success. The run of *Shall We Join the Ladies?* must naturally depend on that of the main and longer offering, but there was no thought of separating them now, and they continued together for four hundred and seven performances, or just under a year. The strange feat of submitting an unfinished mystery to the ordinary theatrical public was accomplished with their complete approval, though it had never been done before, and it is extremely unlikely that it will ever be done again. The entertainment was the point, of course, in this queer essay in detective-drama. Nobody really minded who the murderer was, and if the author had been quite certain himself, and had gone on to tell them, it might easily have been a much flatter affair. But that dead end to his own powers of invention had been twisted into a fresh aspect of Barrie-ism. Luck and cleverness had once more done the trick, and the public not only fell under the enchantment, but paid to be left stranded in another part of the magic wood.

Elizabeth and Audrey Lucas were guests in the flat at the beginning of this month. On March 18th there was a week-end visit to Lord and Lady Desborough—also beginning to be old friends by now—at Taplow Court, where Barrie distinguished himself at various round games; and in the middle of the week after his return he again spent a night at Max Gate with the Hardys. But the principal occupation now, on which he had been working with increasing labour and anxiety, was the St. Andrews rectorial address. Old and new thoughts went into it together, and draft after draft was filling the drawers of his desk. He was taking



enormous trouble over it, for he felt an enormous sense of responsibility. But he was very nervous. He wanted to say something that would really help those students, if he possibly could; but then he had been a student himself once, and he knew how easily they could turn into an unmanageable mob. As he wrote of Courage, he had constantly to call on this quality himself, for he was nearing a scene and a test where there could be no lurking behind the curtain of a private box. He was going into the arena this time. Without his cigar. Without any of the post-prandial background. He was meeting that difficult and critical younger generation face to face, and though he understood them far better than they could ever understand him, this only meant that he must be all the more alone.

He finished his final draft with a fortnight to spare, and though he knew it by heart already, his secretary sat up most of the night copying it out for him in large handwriting, so that if the worst happened he could read it without his glasses. Meanwhile, it had been his privilege and duty to submit a list of names of those who, as part of the same ceremony, should receive the honorary degree of LL.D.—as he himself had received it twenty-four years ago. This, of course, would be bestowed by the Chancellor—now Earl Haig, who had succeeded Lord Balfour of Burleigh on his death last year—and the complete list would contain some nominees of his own as well. Here, however, is the Rector's little lot. Thomas Hardy, Robertson Nicoll, and Sidney Colvin—none of whom, unhappily, would be well enough to attend; Sir Squire Bancroft, Bernard Freyberg, John Galsworthy, E. V. Lucas, Charles Whibley, and last—though anything but least—Miss Ellen Terry. All friends, you see, and all now to be honoured by one who found himself in a special position to do so. Of course the list was approved. Though in some ways it was anything but an ordinary list, there could be no question of that. And the friends were all to gather in St. Andrews and attend the ceremony on Wednesday, May 3rd.

Barrie left London on the Monday night, accompanied by Cynthia, E.V., and Freyberg, spent the Tuesday morning conducting one of his tours round Edinburgh, and reached St. Andrews—where he and Miss Terry were to be the Principal and Mrs. Irvine's guests—on the Tuesday afternoon. There was an academic dinner that evening, followed by the first speech, to a torchlight procession

that suddenly surrounded the house. And this set the pace. The loyal Freyberg's instructions had been to stand between Barrie and the whole world, and to explain, as often as might be necessary, that the Rector was resting or unable to appear. This he was more than prepared to do. In fact he was doing it all the time. But as fast as he did it, the Rector revealed himself to a fresh audience, rose up once more, and delivered another speech. Not again on that first night, and not until the main ordeal was over. But afterwards—

No, we mustn't anticipate. He was pale with apprehension all that Wednesday morning. Reaction after the torchlight procession had assured him that disaster lay ahead, and he was busy marking the speech—though copies, of course, had already been circulated to the Press—for hasty and wholesale cuts. He was the colour of paper when he entered the hall, and there was enough shouting and shuffling to confirm his worst fears. The students showed little or no respect for Lord Haig, whatever they may have felt, and he had to fight one of his less successful engagements to get through his own part of the proceedings at all. The distinguished visitors were beginning to quiver with anxiety, too, and matters didn't improve when Barrie came forward in a quite obvious condition of nerves. He wasn't even too audible at first, and though the uproar had died down, almost everybody expected that at any moment it would break out again.

There was a large paper-knife on the table beside him. He got hold of it somehow, and began fiddling with it as though it were the one but uncertain link with safety. Yet every movement was distracting the audience, and marring the delivery of the address. A sudden, loud cry from the body of the hall. "Put it down, Jamie, or you'll cut your throat!" Barrie dropped it, smiled, took another deep breath; and that was the last moment at which there was the faintest sign of hesitation or distress. That impudent, human shout had pulled him together. His voice grew firmer, his gestures were once more under perfect control. The students were hushed. He was playing with them now. He'd got them. He didn't cut a word or a syllable. There was an unearthly silence when he pulled out that last letter from Captain Scott, and read it as the essence of his text. There were cheers for Miss Terry and Freyberg, when their own names were mentioned. There was laughter at the jokes; a kind of happy purr at the gentler yet irresistible bits of Barrie; and at the end a momentary pause while even gratitude and enthusiasm

must also pull themselves together before they could express what they felt.\*

Then came the undergraduate thunder, in peal after peal. He had done it. He'd brought it off. The spell hadn't failed. He was happy now; he was up in the clouds; he felt capable of making twenty speeches to an audience like that. The occasion so long but not artfully postponed, and the anxious exordium, had turned into a greater triumph than even the Rector—the retiring Rector now, in both senses—had dared to hope. Genius had taken its infinite trouble, and had sent forth a message, in its own language, which had honoured both St. Andrews and itself. That spread, immediately, right round the world. That was clear this time, for there was no mystery, except in the secret of its literary and rhetorical skill. What did it solve? Nothing, perhaps; and yet they who read it twice, or three times, and then detected that it praised what it couldn't define, and called for what it couldn't explain, were missing the virtue and value that are still there. Courage needs no definition in addressing an audience of that age. If you tell them that the time has arrived for youth to demand partnership, it is useless as well as impossible to tell them how to gain it. But brave words, wrapped in magic, and with the stimulus of those touches of autobiography—these are what youth can understand.

Immense acclamation in the Press. An insistent demand—but both his publishers were ready at once—for a more permanent record of the full and authorised text. Immediate acceptance of another mythological being—of whom the creator almost immediately became exceedingly tired—in the shape of M'Connachie. So real, so true, and such a remarkable nuisance. There were moments when even Frankenstein must have felt less regret, for at least no one expected him to smile whenever his monster was mentioned. But the public would make its own jokes about M'Connachie from now on, as it had once made them about Little Mary; and again Barrie must go on feeling how often and completely it had missed the real point. Yet all this would be later. At the moment, after an oratorical silence of fourteen years, and more than two years' thought and preparation for the speech that had just been delivered, he had come back as a conqueror, and knew it. That night he spoke

\* The sonnet quoted by Barrie in this speech was one of two written by Michael Davies on Eilean Shona. Both sonnets were published in *The Eton College Chronicle* on the anniversary of his birthday in 1922, and again, a few days later, in *The Times*.

again at a banquet. Later—having sent Freyberg ahead to say that it was impossible for him to do anything of the sort—he visited and addressed both the male and female students' Unions. On the next day, when he was presented with the Freedom of St. Andrews, there was another speech at the Town Hall; a further speech at the luncheon afterwards; and a subsequent appearance, as a hand-shaking host, at an enormous garden party. Somehow in the middle of all this he found time to play a species of cricket with the Chancellor and Freyberg; there is a characteristic photograph of Haig batting, in a full uniform, and Barrie bowling to him in a hat and flying scarf. On the next day again he made two speeches at Dundee, for the College which is part of St. Andrews University. Perhaps there were other speeches, and certainly there were other functions. When off the stage, as it were, he was constantly relapsing into almost complete prostration; but at the next call he flung it aside, and was there, at the top of his form, again. There were royal charm and courtesy not only for his own friends, but for every professor or official to whom he was introduced.

From Miss Ellen Terry to G.B.S., in a letter of May 6th. "If only you had seen J.M.B. yesterday! He was *almost* as beautiful and adorable as my 5 months' old kitten. If only you had been there to watch him! He seems to me to be so ill, the poor mite. How he kept it up all the while! Haig is a pet, and the two together are—well, I'm glad I was there to see two such boys! Their fun! I loved 'em, not so much of course as *you*—but there!"

That gives the picture and a true one. He spread himself, spent himself, and held back nothing, from the moment of his arrival on the Tuesday afternoon until his final departure, so exhausted that he could hardly move or speak, by the night train for London on the Saturday. But it had been worth it. Not only for the hundreds whom he had amused, and fascinated, and entertained, but for J.M.B. himself. He had waited almost until the end of his period of office, and then he had more than made up for the inevitable but effective delay. He was utterly worn out by that tremendous expenditure of the force within him, but as he crept back into the flat again he did so with the knowledge that he had achieved another enormous and entirely personal success. That was interesting, to say the least of it. He hadn't lost an old gift, or merely imagined that he could sway the multitude. He would be sixty-two on Tuesday, and still there was no absorbing idea for a new play. But

if he chose to speak in public again at any time— Well, perhaps he might, and perhaps he would.

On that same Saturday night that the author left Scotland, Sir Gerald du Maurier and Frank Curzon revived *Dear Brutus* at Wyndham's Theatre, with some old and new members of the cast, but with renewed success. Already Gerald could make a joke about M'Connachie in his curtain speech, with the assurance of understanding and a laugh. A steady, comfortable run of thirty-two weeks. Two Barrie plays in the West End again. No sign whatever of a post-war slump. How soon, people were wondering, would there be a new, full-length Barrie? Yet though the little box was anything but empty, as the owner turned over the contents he still hesitated, and then once more put everything back. Not yet, said the voice that guided him. He was tired. And still there were the other thoughts that couldn't be escaped.

From a letter of May 18th, 1922, to a very close and old friend. "Do you know that this day a year ago Michael was alive and that next day he was dead? . . . I feel that he is at Oxford to-day in his rooms and that to-morrow he is going out to be drowned, and doesn't know it. I spoke about Courage as you know at St. Andrews, but it does seem to me so often as if there was something monotonous in my still being here. Peter is coming to-morrow to stay the night, and will be everything that is kind."

And then an abrupt change of subject. Life, he was implying, and whether he could bear it or not, must still go on.

The Irvines spent a few nights with him this month. On the day after the tragic anniversary he went down, with Beb and Cynthia, for a week-end at Lady Dufferin's, and then they returned and stayed with him again until the end of July. On Friday, May 26th, he made another speech, as guest of the Critics' Circle, at the Savoy Hotel. A. B. Walkley, in his sixty-seventh year now, occupied the chair, and proposed the toast of "The Drama and Barrie," to which there was a long, half-impudent and half-sentimental reply. Worth reading—you will find it in *M'Connachie and J.M.B.*—and full of mellowness and generosity as well. Yet apart from the fact that this is no place to quote speeches that can so easily be studied elsewhere, there is now and henceforth the biographical difficulty that all the remaining speeches—right through to the end of that volume—are so largely autobiographical in themselves. They are not always accurate, even—which again isn't always—when they are

meant to be; except in the sense that they are a constant representation of the way in which the speaker envisaged his own character and career. But it would be a dull job to go on correcting the mis-statements, and when all is said and done there is an extraordinary elasticity in truth. The J.M.B., or the M'Connachie, that Barrie described—in these addressess, and again in *The Greenwood Hat*—was a symbol and at times a deliberate caricature. The description could apply to nobody else, but the longer he toyed with it, the more the figure that he presented became yet another creation of his own. At least, however, as he goes on ticking and cluding us, and as we go on trying to pin him down, we are now well out of the period which he illuminated and obscured himself. For the flashes of autobiography always go right back into the past.

At Whitsun—at the beginning of June this year—he spent five days with a gathering of friends at an hotel in Sheringham. Beb and Cynthia, Lord and Lady Wemyss, Lady Desborough, Lord Balfour, Evan Charteris, and Lord D'Abernon. He enjoyed this, obviously and enormously; apart from a frantic hour spent in hiding from a photographer, who then turned out to have been hunting Lord Balfour all the time. On June 14th Bernard Freyberg was married, near her parents' house in Surrey, to Barbara McLaren—a niece of Lady Horner's, whose first husband had been killed in a flying accident during the war—and Barrie officiated as Best Man. On July 1st he was down at Winchester, to see Nicholas—approaching nineteen now and the end of his school-days—playing cricket for Eton. Ten days later there was a one-night visit from his old friend Walter Blaikie, of Constable's. And four days after that there was still greater glory for Nico, and for one who watched him batting and keeping wicket, in the Eton and Harrow match at Lord's. Just ten years since George's triumphs in the same arena, and victory this time for the British climate, which drowned the contest in a draw. But Barrie was still proud, and elusive, and sartorially independent among all the top-hats and tail-coats. He had meant all four of his own Etonians to play in this match, and two of them had been cheated out of it by the war. But two had helped to make the only history that mattered, and for himself, if it comes to that, he hadn't finished with either Eton or cricket yet.

It was in this month also that the faithful and admirable Brown was compelled, after twelve and a half years, to retire from his

service. A sad parting, on both sides, but the doctors had insisted that Mrs. Brown should move into the country, and there could be no other choice. So Brown bought a house in Lincolnshire—which he called Mürren, in pious memory of that Swiss holiday at the beginning of 1914—took up farming in a small way, and continued to keep in touch with his employer, and to send him parcels of apples and other produce, for the rest of his life. Peace to his cheerful, courageous, and devoted spirit. He wouldn't be forgotten, and he mustn't be forgotten; for he had done more than well in his long and often extraordinary task.

He was succeeded, immediately, by the pale and as some considered the slightly sinister Frank Thurston, who will now remain in this post until the end. A mysterious character, it must be admitted, though in care and devotion there was nothing to choose between him and Brown. He had been in this kind of job all his life—except for an interlude in the trenches—but had somehow acquired familiarity not only with French and Spanish, but with Latin and Greek as well. This was rather alarming. So was his expressionless silence, after Brown's beaming friendliness. So was his habit, after a very short time, of answering the telephone in a voice which only experts could distinguish from his employer's. One didn't take liberties with Frank Thurston—and was still further shaken by never knowing which of these names to use, because Barrie used both—and he had a decided air at times of being a bit of a Lob, though in a very subtle and secret way, himself. Had Barrie invented him, one sometimes wondered? Had he really a separate life of his own? Could one be quite certain—though one didn't like to mention it—that he hadn't gone out of the dining-room by one door and re-entered, which was a physical impossibility, by the other? Did he really despise one, or was it merely that he knew everything, at a glance, including one's weaknesses and faults?

All this concealed—or, if you came to know him well enough, actually magnified—a heart of true gold. Moreover, he had a very complete and genuine separate existence, and a home to which he retired at night. He had slipped in so quietly at first, and appeared to be such a contrast to Brown—and his employer was so proud of his scholastic attainments—that one was a bit nervous for a while. But one needn't have been, and presently, with any sort of luck, one wasn't. He was entirely human behind that mask, he had a pro-

found depth of understanding for his remarkable employer, and looked after him for fifteen years with tremendous concentration, and forethought, and pains. We needn't worry about his safety or comfort, so far as they lie in a manservant's hands, as the story passes from July, 1922, into the years that still remain. Frank Thurston may be reading Pliny in the pantry, but he is going to be an extraordinarily faithful and indispensable adherent from now on.

Almost his first rôle, however, after barely a fortnight as manservant in a bachelor flat, was as butler in a big country house; for Barrie had taken Stanway again, on another six weeks' tenancy, and went down there on July 29th. Among the guests this year—in addition to the more permanent *entourage* of Nico and the Asquiths—were his sister and brother-in-law; his brother's widow and her eldest daughter, who was now a head-mistress; Jack and Gerrie Davies; the Dufferins and their two children; Katharine Asquith and her six-year-old son; the Freybergs; Charles Whibley; Lord David Cecil; and Audrey Lucas. All the old games began at once, and a new one as well. Puff-billiards—or as the shops, for some reason, call it, Billiard Nicholas—which the host brought down with him, and of which his sister became an immediate and fanatical addict; while her husband smiled kindly and quietly in the background, and occasionally achieved his own constant desire for a game of Chess. But Barrie himself—who had again chosen the small bedroom which he had occupied last year—still stuck mostly to golf-croquet, lawn cricket, and shuffleboard, or went off for a walk, with his secretary or some honoured guest, as the shadows lengthened after tea.

In the middle of the second week a Police-Sergeant suddenly appeared and announced—to the host's mingled pride and alarm—that he was there to make arrangements for a visit from Her Majesty the Queen. It was the house that she was proposing to inspect—for this was her favourite holiday amusement—rather than the inhabitants, but of course there was some natural nervousness at first. Cynthia sent an urgent summons to her mother, the real *châtelaine*, who returned in time to help; and when Her Majesty arrived, on August 14th—accompanied by twelve supporters—all was in order, the tenant was at the top of his own most gracious form, and the whole affair was an enormous success. Her Majesty remembered to ask for the solution to *Shall We Join the Ladies?* and the author was ready with a courteous, if still mystifying, reply.



May we say that they took to each other? Why shouldn't we? Of course they did, when there was every reason why they should. They would meet again, more than once, and always with a kind of personal twinkle behind due and mutual regard for each other's positions. Barric as a courtier must, of course, still be himself. But there was sincerity in his admiration, and the side that he showed in exalted quarters had dignity as well as fun.

In the following week he organised and superintended a golf-croquet tournament for the servants, and at the end of the month there was a festival on a remarkable scale. A cricket-week for the Eton XI, the main body of which now arrived *en masse*, with contemporary female society, and dancing, acting, and games every night. All for Nico, of course; and it was true that even the host sometimes wondered when he would be allowed to go to bed; but he enjoyed every moment of it himself. This was Black Lake Cottage revived, magnified, and raised to altogether fresh and glorious heights. But with the same Captain in ultimate and irresistible command. At the last dinner he insisted on speeches all round, and the worse they were, the more pleasure they gave him. And once more, as at Black Lake, he made far and away the best speech himself. Then it was all over, the cricketers and girls departed, there were a few more of the quieter evenings, and on September 10th he was back again at the flat.

Nico was now an old Etonian. In October—by which time Barric had paid a visit to Lady Horner, and started a long series of seasonable colds—he went up to New College, though still actually quartered in digs. This was the period when he came as near as anyone to stepping into Michael's shoes; yet they both knew that he wasn't Michael; that one place could never really be filled. And again, after the gaiety of Stanway, there was a relapse into listlessness, and sleeplessness, and constant complaints to the inner circle that nothing any longer seemed quite worth while. No new stimulus from without. No new urge of creation from within. Life, at sixty-two, a matter of too many memories, and so often of too little interest and hope. Yet still there were the friends, and the evenings when he roused himself, and could still make everyone laugh. But suddenly as from a distance, and you knew what he had remembered. When you had left him, or he had gone out into the night again, it was the sadness that must linger in your own mind

From the note-book. "*Michael*. On 7th Nov. 1922 I dreamt that he came back to me, not knowing that he was drowned, and that I kept this knowledge from him, and we must continue for another year in old way till the fatal 19th approached again, and . . ." No. It's altogether too painful, though the dream goes on, and then passes into five more pages for the book that was never written. A terrible, lonely, merciless kind of dream. And only this, among all the remaining entries, that one would dare or be cruel enough to quote.

"It is as if long after writing 'P. Pan' its true meaning came to me. Desperate attempts to grow up but can't."

He saw that too, now, and at sixty-two it was the loneliest sight of all.

This was the autumn when the Coalition Government was blown to pieces by a meeting at the Carlton Club, and that Bonar Law and the Conservatives, with his policy of Tranquillity, were returned with an independent majority of seventy-five. Barrie gave a little dinner at a restaurant to see the election results come in, but with no particular enthusiasm now for any particular party. "I find," says a letter from the flat, "that I know neither who is standing for this division nor even what the division is called." And indeed there was more negative than positive voting at this first of the three general elections that were held in just over two years. He wanted bolder heroes, and hadn't found them yet. Or they hadn't revealed themselves, though he would support both Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin when their stature came up to his needs. Two more friendships there, in his great collection of Prime Ministers, as rewards for their courage when the right time came. He had always put men before measures.

*Dear Brutus*, which he had been revising at Stanway, joined the uniform edition in this same month. In December he had a night at Cambridge, to meet A. E. Housman, who was as reserved and could be quite as silent as himself. "We growled amiably," is the report. On the 18th he gave a dinner for Lord Haig at the flat. Three days later *Peter Pan* returned to the St. James's, with Miss Edna Best as Peter again, Lyn Harding as Captain Hook, and Miss Prudence Bouchier—Miss Violet Vanbrugh's twenty-year-old daughter—as Mrs. Darling. For Christmas Barrie again joined the Wemyss household at Stanway.

Jack, Gerrie, and little Timothy Davies were guests at the flat in the first weeks of 1923, for Jack's naval duties were still on shore. Timothy, aged one and a half now, rushed or tottered violently to and fro, but was certainly too young to realise where he was staying, or to appreciate the host's occasional efforts to entertain him. Then, as he and his parents moved on again, there was a sudden and bad scare about Nico.

In the second half of February he was seized with an attack of appendicitis; was hurried up from Oxford to Sir Douglas Shields's nursing-home; was operated on, with apparent success; but a few days later had an alarming relapse. At the same moment Barrie went down with one of his worst colds, and for three weeks had to stay in bed himself, in constant anxiety, while Cynthia did her best to cheer two invalids at once. By the middle of March he was just able to get round to Park Lane, for a daily visit, by taxi; but Nicholas was now iller than ever, Barrie himself was still very far from well, and the loyal Freyberg, who was now his guest again, had had a relapse too. Though the two older patients continued slowly to improve, Nico was still in continual danger, and Barrie could think of nothing else. One sees what was haunting him, and indeed there was reason enough for weeks and weeks on end, while outsiders hold their breath and thought also of George and Michael. Was there to be a third, and cumulative, and this time, if it happened, a knock-out blow? No one could tell yet. No one could do anything, for even in the nursing-home there was no more to be done, and who could hold out hope to Barrie, when Barrie looked like that?

He was still there, day after day, with his own thoughts and, in Nico's presence, with his own unquenchable courage. It was thus, seventeen years ago, that he had sat with this boy's father. Still, also, partly from kindness but partly because it helped him, he was paying constant visits to Cynthia's children, and joining with them in his own inspired games. But there were dark hours, long and endless, at the flat.

At the beginning of May—ten weeks now since it had all started—Cynthia and Beb came to stay with him again, and battled with the silences as best they could. There were rehearsals now, for the second London revival, under J. E. Vedrenne's management, of *What Every Woman Knows*, and Barrie was attending some of them, though his mind was still very much elsewhere. And then

more sadness, because of more memories, on May 4th. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, who had been ill for eighteen months, and sinking since the beginning of April, died at his house in Hampstead at the age of seventy-one. "One thing," Barrie had written to him, just under a month ago, "that certainly has not changed in me, nor I am sure in you, is our old affection. In my mind I have many adventures with you still and embark once more on our lugger for U.S.A." Nearly twenty-seven years since that joint expedition, and thirty-six since Gavin Ogilvy's first article in the *British Weekly*. But the time when Barrie had resented his old friend's possessive pride in him had also long since passed. What they had shared might always be less than what had sent and kept each on his own road through life; yet they had made literary history together, and when a chapter such as this one closed now, it must always seem that another barrier had arisen to cut off those distant days of happiness and hope. His last article in the *British Weekly*—a tribute to its very remarkable founder—appeared during this month.

There was another ending, just six weeks later, when Maurice Hewlett died, at Broadchalke, at the age of sixty-two. A different and a shorter chapter, but one that couldn't be forgotten. Without Hewlett there might have been no Lucases. There must always be gratitude to him for that.

By the beginning of the fourth week in May it was decided that Nico was just well enough to be moved, and Barrie took him down, with a nurse, to an hotel at Margate; Cynthia and her children following in a day or two, and staying in a bungalow near by. Almost at once there was another bad relapse, which affected Barrie nearly as much as the patient. But it was the last. There was a long way to go still, as the poison slowly retreated, but on June 11th Nico was able to dress, to shave, and even to dine in the hotel dining-room and drink a glass of champagne. Fully another month of convalescence, while they all stayed on at Margate, but the cloud was lifting, and they could leave, just in time to attend the Eton and Harrow match, by the middle of July. Then Nico went off abroad for a week, and Barrie began preparing for the third summer festival at Stanway. Nearly four months of anxiety, terror, and devotion. No work all this time. How could there have been in a spring and summer like that?

But another success, with an old play at a new theatre, on May 24th. *What Every Woman Knows* at the Apollo, with Miss

Hilda Trevelyan in her old part, and Godfrey Tearle as John Shand. Once more the critics had to point out the improbabilities and the queer blending of the various component parts, but London still liked to have a Barrie play on tap, and continued to support it for just over eight months. On August 15th *The Will* was revived at the St. Martin's, as a curtain-raiser to Charles McEvoy's *The Likes of Her*, and accompanied its prosperous run until the end of the following February.

Meanwhile, Barrie, with the secretary-châtelaine and her family, had gone down to Stanway on July 25th. Many of last year's visitors had been invited again, including, of course, the Winters, but during the six weeks' house-party there were a number of additions as well. The Hamlin Garlands and two daughters, from America. Lord Darling and a daughter. Lady Lytton and a daughter. Elizabeth Lucas. Lord Wemyss—a guest in his own house. Basil Dean. G. W. (or Tuppy) Headlam, from Eton. And Gilmour. Something like forty or fifty names altogether, when one includes the children—always there or thereabouts until dusk—and the cricketers, Nico's friends again, who arrived for the special week of matches and dancing at the end of August. Constant golf-croquet, with all the other outdoor and indoor games, and the host periodically vanishing, with a companion, on his walks. Another festival idea was to have a professional camera-man down, and make the visitors take part in a more or less inpromptu film. Charades, again, with Barrie in his favourite rôle of a shy young Scotchman alone in a railway-carriage with a pretty girl. A brilliant though cruel bit of acting, built, it would seem, on a memory and an early article, which would presently reappear in *The Greenwood Hat*. A night of speeches again at the end of the cricket-week, and the distribution of special Stanway caps. Ghosts of the Allahakbarries, but only one present who had known them in their greatest glory, for by this time Elizabeth Lucas and Gilmour had both left. Farewell to Stanway once more, for which Nico and his recovery had been more than ever the ostensible excuse, but which Barrie had enjoyed from first to last. Or which, perhaps, he was completely convinced that he had enjoyed in this manner as soon as it had all slipped into the past.

There was a visual revival on October 11th, when a number of the Stanway guests and cricketers were bidden to a banquet, and taken on afterwards to see themselves in a Wardour Street projection-room. And about a fortnight later there was another private

showing at the flat. By that time Barrie was rehearsing again, with Basil Dean at the Queen's Theatre, for a third production of *The Little Minister*; in which Miss Fay Compton and Owen Nares played the two principal parts, and Norman McKinnel was the chief Elder. This was to open on November 7th, and the dress-rehearsal, on the previous evening, dragged on into the small hours. When Barrie left, there was no sign of anything worse than natural fatigue; but in the morning something had obviously happened. A general vagueness had come over him, which was so alarming that Nico—who happened to have come up from Oxford for the day—eventually telephoned to Cynthia. By the time she arrived, it had passed, and he was himself again. Strain and hard work, no doubt, had produced some acute though quite temporary form of nervous exhaustion; but by now he was alarmed himself. He knew how many members of his family had drifted, after a certain age, into a permanent condition of vagueness; and from now onwards, one may say—though doctors assured him again and again that the fear in his own case was quite unfounded—a fresh terror lurked and refused to be dislodged. He used it not only to torment himself, but sometimes to strike terror into others as well. He spoke of it, and as he spoke he had to begin acting again. One was supposed, perhaps, to laugh at this bugbear—which was all it was—yet when he hugged it like that, or deliberately experimented with this kind of illusion, what on earth could anyone do? Pity him, of course; or sometimes, if daring enough, show a little impatience as well. There was no cure, though, except in the natural ebb and flow. Suddenly it was inconceivable that he should ever have behaved like this, or that a brain like that could ever have felt anxiety or fatigue. Thus he sped through all those secret rooms and corridors, and still must be lonely wherever he turned or paused.

He was well enough, in any case, to attend his own first night, which passed off with very considerable success. The second revival of *The Little Minister* in fact, just beat the first one, with a run of seventeen weeks. Three Barrie plays in London again—two of them in Shaftesbury Avenue. Four Barrie plays at Christmas, when *Peter Pan* came to the Adelphi, with Miss Gladys Cooper—very boyish, and in shorts for a change—as Peter, and Franklin Dyall as Hook. Five Barrie plays, for a brief moment, at the end of January, when Miss Marie Tempest and Graham Browne revived *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* for a two-months' run at the Comedy. But though the author

attended these two last sets of rehearsals as well, he was still in a very up-and-down state of health and mind. In November he had been in Shields's nursing-home—where his secretary was also having treatment—for general observation and a kind of rest-cure. He felt well enough, however, after another cold, to get down to Stanway just after Christmas, and in good enough spirits to arrive with the apparatus for yet another indoor game.

Yet this is the mood in which he writes to Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, a day or two after his return.

"I sit here as dull as my fire-logs and not giving out as much heat. The farthest I go (but not often so far afield) is to Oxford Street, and on my more gallant days I don't take a taxi back. Mentally, I am afraid, my ventures are about as far-reaching, and I have even ceased to ease my conscience by vowing to begin something or other on the morrow. . . . I am all right in health again—don't quite understand what was the matter with me. I sank—that is about it." Then comes a reference to the general election of January, 1924, at which Ramsay MacDonald and the Labour Party were returned to uneasy office. "People in general seem very perturbed, but I am strangely calm, and expect things will go on much as usual whoever gets into power next week. And even if they don't— Well, we need a stirring up."

To Lady Hilton Young—as Lady Scott had now become by her re-marriage in 1922—about a fortnight later, and after an allusion to Peter Scott's new school life at Oundle: "Last night I had my first outing for ages—went to see the House of Commons in the throes—at least I expected it to be so, but they looked more like a jolly lot of scallywags."

Still, in other words, he is the hermit, or is in a mood where he likes to think so. A hermit, it is true, who smokes rather more than most hermits; who keeps in much closer touch with current literature and journalism, and still appears, at intervals, at a number of the more glorious West End grill-rooms and restaurants. A hermit, also, who is anything but forgotten by theatrical managers and those who support them. But a hermit, or philosopher, or again a very highly-skilled actor, who chooses so often now to play the part of one whose day is past and gone. He knows perfectly well that it isn't, that letters from strangers are still pouring in from all over the world, and that Thurston still has to be a watch-dog as well as a butler and valet. He wouldn't, as a matter of fact, at all like it to be

otherwise. It is, indeed, the essence of the situation that he can still so well afford to treat his enormous public with so little apparent gratitude or respect. But they are well trained now. They don't seem to mind. While if he should, by any chance, happen to answer one of those letters, the value of such a sign from his mysterious fastness will of course be enormously increased.

On January 16th, or half-way between the two fragments that have just been quoted, the Jack Davieses' second child was born. A daughter this time. Christened Sylvia Jocelyn, for a very good reason, but somehow she would actually answer—when capable of doing so—to the name of Jane. A very distinct look, as a little girl, of the original Sylvia, but much more quiet and solemn. Quiet and solemn enough, at any rate, to resist some of Barrie's experienced advances; which he would find so startling and disturbing that he must now announce that he had lost the spell, and that all children had done with him for good. But this, of course, was only to mark the extent of his own astonishment at so very rare a mischance. He was getting, perhaps, a little warier and wearier anyhow, and a little less inclined to keep on beginning again. But he never lost the children who had succumbed already, and Michael and Simon Asquith—to mention only the two who came first now—would still fall under the old enchantment whenever he chose to turn it on.

There was another speech coming nearer, and to this extent at least he was writing, and therefore happy, again. His eldest niece, Lilian, who had once inspired the second chapter of *My Lady Nicotine*, and with whom he had played while still a student at Edinburgh, had adopted her father's first profession; and with such success—and also such pride and satisfaction for her uncle—that she was now Headmistress of the Girls' High School at Wallasey, in Cheshire. There had been long gaps in their meetings, but she had come to stay with him several times of late—as henceforth she would continue to do—and now, as a tribute to the past and present, he had promised to address her pupils. The occasion was magnified into a gathering at the Wallasey Town Hall, and there, on February 26th, he delivered a speech about his niece, himself, and education, which was at once and widely reproduced in the Press. Indeed, the effect of these addresses seemed to spread now, into leading articles and quotations, for days on end. No one else held quite this indefinable public position, as one who might now crop up almost anywhere,



and would always have a second and far larger audience to welcome and ponder over his words. There was a quality that the Press found irresistible. They just had to print him and write about him, for even when he appeared to have forgotten this point—and some of the speeches are trifling enough without the acting or in the cold silence of type—he was still unmistakable news. One looked at a column with his name at the top, and if one had ever heard him, an echo sent one rushing through it at once. Or if one hadn't, it was still essential to see what on earth he had been up to now. One admired. One was affronted. One was touched. One had never read anything so preposterous or impertinent in one's life. But it never occurred to one to skip the column next time. There was an epoch when he very nearly overdid it; so nearly that there were some, undoubtedly, who thought that he had. But then as the speeches diminished and finally ceased, we all knew—every one of us—that our newspapers could never be quite the same again.

A bad cold again in March. Ten days in bed at the flat, and then back to 17, Park Lane once more, for Sir Douglas and his nurses to do what they could, and a slow return to something more like ordinary spirits and health. By the middle of April he was home again, and seeing his friends. The immediate though not urgent task was the revision of *Mary Rose*, which he began in May, and which was published, as the ninth and last volume, in his life-time, of the uniform edition, at the end of the year. He spent his sixty-fourth birthday at Margate again, where Cynthia was installing Michael—nearly ten now—at his private school. Another short, sharp attack of unidentifiable illness at the beginning of June, and the resumption now, after three years' postponement or delay, of plans for the American film version of *Peter Pan*. Again the powers in Hollywood wanted him to go out and superintend, though they still didn't want his own version, and again he kept on refusing, and then hesitating so that they asked him again. Meanwhile, part of the apparently indispensable publicity was that he should be represented as considering numerous candidates for the honour of the title-rôle. Some of them weren't candidates at all, and some he had never heard of, but the game was kept up with showers of photographs and several conducted visits to special showings of films. At one moment he was interested, and at the next he was detached and bored. Should he pay a third visit to America,

and his first to what they called the Coast, after all? Or shouldn't he? Why should he if he didn't want to? No reason whatsoever. Then somebody managed to suggest the special glamour of American film-studios again, and the thought of penetrating these fresh and closely-guarded mysteries almost made him yield. Not quite, though. And there was still much to be said for keeping everyone guessing. As there always was.

Snatches from Cynthia's diary for this summer:

"June 22nd. Took Simon and me to Botanical Gardens.

"July 5th. Tea and acting with Simon. [One of Barrie's innumerable visits to his secretary's house in Sussex Place.]

"July 8th. Dinner at flat. Wells, Mamma, Haldane, Lady Desborough, Hodder-Williamses [Sir Ernest Hodder-Williams was now the Chairman of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton], Peter, Mrs. Lucas. Success."

And so, at the end of the month, to the fourth summer holiday at Stanway. Peter and Nico. The Winters. Gilmour. Augustine Birrell—long, midnight talks with him. Charles Whibley. The Freybergs. The Granville-Barkers. Elizabeth Lucas. And others, though not quite so many as last year, from the same concentric circles. The indoor and outdoor games. The cricket-week, the cricket dance, and the cricket charades. Sudden and now impressively historical revival of Sir Henry Irving in *The Bells*. Tremendous occasion, almost at the end, of the host's participation in a real cricket-match; of his taking a wicket with one of his diabolical slow left-handers; of the immediate determination of himself and everyone else concerned that this should develop, as it did, into the hat-trick. But there were still two other dramas being played.

In the first, after a dash back to London, during which he had practically pledged himself to leave for Hollywood at the beginning of September, Barrie reappeared with a couple of film executives in close pursuit. Retired with them, and also with much mystery, for still further discussions of the scenario, and emerged with the startling intimation that they wanted Cynthia to play Mrs. Darling, and Simon for the part of Michael. A wild but intoxicating suggestion. The kind in which any decision is guaranteed to produce regret. Exeunt the executives, though only, apparently, so as to return with still fiercer enthusiasm than before. But they had mistimed it; or else Barrie suddenly decided that the whole thing was impossible. He wasn't going to America, and Cynthia and Simon

most certainly weren't going without him. So the executives withdrew once more, leapt on to a liner, and proceeded with the production without these interesting additions to the directorate and cast. It was announced that the author had selected Miss Betty Bronson—a young and almost unknown player—for the title-rôle; that Miss Mary Brian was to play Wendy; and that Ernest Torrence would be Captain Hook. The film was completed that autumn, shown in New York at the end of December, and in London—at the Pavilion—in the middle of the following January. The treatment stuck pretty closely to the play, and as these were still the days of silent films, an orchestra accompanied it with the original music. This was quite right, of course; no other accompaniment was conceivable; yet in a sense it was the music as much as anything that made one long for colour, and real actors, and the smell of the smoke from the chimney of the little house as it had once been borne over the footlights at the Duke of York's. Somehow the film must seem further than ever from Kensington Gardens and the woods at Black Lake. The American flavour might be faint, but it was quite unmistakable, and in London, at any rate, we knew that Peter and his companions were as English as the author was Scotch. Nevertheless, it was anything but a failure on innumerable screens, where an international quality is, as a matter of fact, almost essential to success.

The other or second drama concerned Nico. Among the girls who attended the Stanway cricket week was Mary James, a daughter of Lord Northbourne, and Nico and she were in love. So far, so good. Very good indeed, in fact, for she wasn't only exceedingly pretty, but extraordinarily nice as well. On the other hand, Nico was still an undergraduate, with another year to go, and as such was hardly in a technical position to think, as he naturally did, of marriage. So Barrie was worried, and walked up and down, and wished it hadn't happened. It was a secret, of course—indeed, they weren't even secretly engaged until September—but he knew it, he felt his responsibility, and kindness and caution were again keeping him awake. Therefore he must seem unkind for a while, and firmer than he always felt. Also he must talk to Cynthia about it, for she was now the indispensable repository of all his anxieties as a guardian and everything else. Odd position, for she was no relation to anyone concerned; but there it was, and would never be otherwise, as she dealt with her own astonishing responsibilities, too.

First Act, then, at Stanway this summer, of the story of Mary and

Nico, with Cynthia certainly playing a pretty exhausting part. Then the scene changes, or we turn—as is commoner in real life—to another play. On September 2nd the fourth Stanway holiday came to an end, and Barrie, accompanied by his secretary and her husband and children, went up to Scotland. A week in the Trossachs where they were joined by Lady Wemyss. Then a night, for Barrie only, with Lord Haldane at Cloan; with special devotion, as always, to his host's remarkable mother—ninety-nine this year—and special, traditional games with his huge Labrador. And so to Gosford—the Wemysses' big house on the Firth of Forth—before returning to London and the flat.

Wood-smoke and tobacco-smoke. Guests, visitors, evenings out—at friends' houses, at a restaurant, at one of his distinguished little dining clubs, but only seldom now at a theatre. Or days of listlessness and nervous depression, when he would go nowhere, and no one but Cynthia must come here. Colds, of course, and bad nights. Then up again, with sudden enthusiasm for a new book, or with a burst of tremendous spirits despite the incessant cough. Taking complete charge of a dinner-table. Doing his tricks again, telling his stories, keeping it up until long after midnight; and then looking so miserable at the last moment that gratitude and pity must again be inextricably involved. But no one could tell him this. Though sometimes his mere mood and manner could plant a crushing burden on other shoulders, one still knew that it was nothing to what he was supporting himself. A victim as well as a triumphant product of genius. But no third alternative, and therefore no possible escape from all that he had created and become.

It was about now, also, that plans began moving, with Barrie very much concerned in them, for Peter Davies to become a publisher. In the five years since his demobilisation this story seems to have seen little of him, though he has been there all the time, and Barrie has never forgotten what he went through in the war. Time, though, if Peter feels this also, to prepare for another effort, and a good deal of excitement and pleasure that it is to be in the world of books. So at the end of this year Peter would go up to Walter Blaikie, in Edinburgh, to learn all about typography and production. Then, with Barrie's backing and very special help from Hodder and Stoughton, he will have a kind of trial trip in London before setting up with an imprint of his own. Barrie will of course be following

everything, and have his own thrill whenever the firm of Peter Davies brings off another success. He is never a partner, nor anything the least like that, but among all the multiple interests there is always a very distinct compartment devoted to Peter and his work.

At the end of October the Labour Government was swept away in yet another general election, together with most of the Liberals who had kept it in power. Baldwin was Prime Minister again. Asquith had again lost his seat. It was this that led to the offer of a peerage, which he accepted a few months later, so that Barrie's secretary—who had once more watched the election results with him and a little dinner-party at the Carlton Hotel—would now be an earl's daughter-in-law as well as an earl's daughter. This, to say the least of it, was distinctly unusual in literary circles. But was no reason, of course, why this particular secretary should start looking for another post.

A week or so later—on November 6th—there was a new stage production of *Peter Pan* at the Knickerbocker Theatre in New York, by Charles Dillingham, who had been Frohman's closest managerial friend; with Miss Marilyn Miller, a dancing and musical-comedy star, in the principal part, with Leslie Banks as Hook, and direction by Basil Dean. It seems to have glittered rather than to have achieved the old magic, and also to have aroused some partisan criticism from those who remembered Miss Adams. But it was news, and not only on the other side of the Atlantic. The London newspapers nearly all paused to take note. A run of ninety-six performances, followed by a short and rather disappointing tour.

On November 12th there was another speech. Ninety-seventh anniversary dinner of the Printers' Pension Corporation, at the Connaught Rooms. Major J. J. Astor, M.P. in the Chair, and the present Duke of Gloucester one of the three principal guests. The toast of Literature and the Press, coupled with the name of Sir James Barrie, proposed by Winston Churchill, and acknowledged in about twelve hundred words of extremely typical mock-reminiscence, and seriousness, and fun. Two more speeches on December 11th, and once again at Dumfries. Presentation of the Freedom, in the afternoon, at the Lyceum Theatre; and a banquet at the Royal Restaurant, with Sir James Crichton-Browne—a distinguished Dumfriesian, and eighty-four this year—in the Chair. A great deal of genuine reminiscence—or as genuine as was ever possible—in the first address, which had again been very carefully

prepared. The second was impromptu, much shorter, and quite obviously requires stage-directions throughout. But both were filled to the brim with Barrie, even if the second—as actually delivered—wasn't the fuller of the two. A happy though exhausting visit, and though a buigess ticket is one of the most mystical gifts that one can receive, there was only one town, perhaps, that could have paid a more deeply-appreciated compliment. Five and a half years later it would pay it; but meanwhile Dumfries had done its utmost and best, and there was a very strong sense of mutual affection and pride. The years at its Academy came nearer again, and there was something about them that no one in England would ever really understand.

"Criffel, the Nith frozen, the Nith released, Torthorwald, Caerlaverock, Lincluden, the Solway, the very names of these are music to Scottish ears; when you and I were young they were our partners in the ball."

A sentence, it should hardly be necessary to say, from the first speech. Art and sincerity. Truth and music. One wonders how often they had been rehearsed and re-written. But one has to admit that Scotland, or something, had made him a poet, after all.

Two days later the following paragraph appeared throughout the Press.

"Sir James Barrie has informed his Dumfries host and old school friend, Mr. James Geddes, that he has in contemplation an idea of writing a play about Robert Burns."

Quite correct. Completely accurate; though he had never meant it to be published. But an idea in contemplation was still literally all that it was. And all that it would remain. There was the equipment, and there, so often, was a desperate longing to get back to his desk. But it wasn't as strong as the inner obstruction, and that weariness, even for the theatre, that still held him in its lingering thrall. Time was rushing past him now, even in those long nights when he was unable to sleep. Something had broken the old habit, and still there was no stimulus that could bring it back. As he watched himself, perhaps it was better that the one whom he watched should now rest or stand aside. Or, again, wasn't it always better to stop too soon than too late? A lonely choice. And why should he, of all people, be compelled to face it? To and fro, and up and down, in the brown, book-lined study; smoking, coughing, and thinking of the past. There were still little jobs to be done,

help to be given, and methods of unique self-expression to while away whatever time might be left. But he wasn't writing a play about Robert Burns. He couldn't. Someone as well as something was missing. As he turned, he could still see Michael's cricket-cap hanging there on the wall.

Yet still there were rehearsals. For *Peter Pan*—the twenty-first year now of the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up—at the Adelphi again, with Miss Gladys Cooper as Peter, Ian Hunter as Hook and Mr. Darling, and Gerald du Maurier's eldest daughter, Angela, as Wendy. Then over to the Haymarket for another Christmas revival of *A Kiss for Cinderella*, with Miss Hilda Trevelyan and Norman McKinnel—also a Dumfriessian—which opened two days later. On the intervening evening he found time to visit another theatre, and to pick—though she didn't know it yet—his Peter Pan for next year. So down to Stanway for Christmas itself, and the end of 1924.

The desk was beckoning again, after all. The immediate stimulus was Cynthia, who had been asked by Messrs. Partridge, the publishers, to edit a volume of stories and poems for children, and in turn had asked her employer to be one of her contributors. It seemed, then, that a request from this source was enough to set something going, and though he didn't tell her what was in his mind, she came in one day in January and found him writing; something, he said, about Captain Hook at Eton. On the following evening she dined with him, and he read it to her, and of course it was accepted at once. It wasn't exactly for children. Indeed, it was distinctly esoteric, if not to the editress, who had had brothers at Eton, too. Furthermore, it was an addition to the original legend; or an addition to an addition; for in the first years of *Peter Pan* the Captain had never thought of mentioning either his public school or his subsequent connection with Balliol. The cry of "*Floreat Etona*" with which he leapt overboard from *The Jolly Roger* had been one of the jokes and inspirations at some later rehearsal. It had remained, though, all the time that Barrie had become more and more familiar with Eton itself, and now he had expanded it into an article so full of local knowledge that it must almost have astonished himself.

Yet four boys and all those innumerable visits to them had certainly made him an authority on scugs, tugs, and everything else. Eton, though he actually came within an ace of criticising it in that speech at Wallasey, was still the school of schools, and in imagina-

tion, at any rate, he had been through it not merely once, but four times. So this was the article, which only an Etonian, you would have thought, could have written, and no one but another Etonian could have fully appreciated or understood. But it never, in fact, went into Cynthia's volume, because even while he was writing it, it had put him on to something else.

Eton again, but a more personal Eton. *Neil and Tintinnabulum*, which would appear—and necessarily be described as an Interlude for Parents—in *The Flying Carpet* next autumn, is very nearly as formless as it is intimate, and never, if it comes to that, mentions the school of schools by name. But the "T" in it is Barrie right enough, and the boy—for Neil and Tintinnabulum were again two sides of the same character—is Michael Davies far oftener than he is any of his brothers, or than he is Michael Asquith, who flits in and out of the composite figure, too. The notes for the book that was never to be written were drawn on freely in this queer and touching story. The "T" forgets again and again that he is trying to be someone like the supposed author of *The Little White Bird*, or even that it is a story at all. One wouldn't say that the schoolboy isn't occasionally himself as well; but never when that sudden and indescribable note of emotion breaks in. "When I think of Neil I know that those were the last days in which I was alive." It's half-hidden, even there. He can pretend, or the reader without a clue can easily believe, that he is only referring to the end of childhood. But he isn't. He wasn't. He was seeking relief, through his strange and at such moments almost unguided pen. He couldn't and wouldn't speak more clearly; but that Interlude for Parents has its own and very special meaning as it toys with a trifling plot and then suddenly comes to an end. He had finished it—or the first version, for he almost immediately began revising it—and given it to Cynthia only a few weeks later; and *Captain Hook at Eton* was simultaneously withdrawn.

It was in this January, also, that *Shall We Join the Ladies?* had its first American production, being put into the bill at the Empire in New York. Remarkable. There was no pretence by this time that it would ever be anything but a fragment, but something still kept it alive. So it was on Broadway now, after nearly four years, because the author's initials were J. M. B.

"This winter," says Cynthia, in the notes which she has made from her diary, "he used to come to tea constantly and act through



the whole of *A Kiss for Cinderella* with Simon—Simon always doing the policeman, and Barrie every other part." Simon, by the way, was still barely five and a half. And again: "Barrie acted all through *Peter Pan* with Simon." And a few weeks later: "Barrie and Simon acted the whole of *Mary Rose*. I have never laughed so much." Simon, in other words, was now very much the principal and essential playmate—in more senses, you gather, than one—and a very enviable position it still was. If he hadn't been precocious, and again extraordinarily good-looking— But of course he was both. He had to be, when his mother had wished it, and a fairy godfather had been at his christening.

Twenty-six years now since George Llewelyn Davies had been five and a half, and Barrie had begun playing with him in Kensington Gardens. But the need for a little boy to listen to his stories, to laugh at his jokes, to be young and enchanted, still went on. Lucky Simon to have come into this wonderful succession. He called his playmate "James" now, which was more than the little Davieses had ever done or thought of doing. But times had changed since the golden nineties, and in a way the greater gap in years was much more closely bridged. Or was it, on the other hand, that the playfellow was at last beginning to notice it, and on which side of it he stood?

Of course one thinks of Peter Pan again, and of how when Wendy grew up he played with her daughter, and then with her daughter's daughter—"and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless." But Barrie was sixty-five this May—birthday dinner with Cynthia at the Ritz—and Peter was still as young as when he had first flown away. That was the difference. That was the sadness. That was the poignancy, as Simon—gay, innocent, and heartless in his turn—played and laughed with a man who knew himself now that it couldn't always go on.

At the end of April the Asquiths had moved into the flat again, for one of their longer visits. During the week the host and his guests would lead a joint or separate existence, as suited their various plans; while at week-ends they might all go away together, or to different destinations, or again Barrie might stay behind. May 16th, for instance: "B. down to Margate with us for week-end." Or May 21st: "B. still sitting up when I came in from dance at 3.30." Whitsuntide—at the end of this month and the beginning of June—was spent by all concerned at Stanway.

Barrie had given a new pavilion to the village cricket club, and there was a semi-formal opening ceremony, with a speech in which he offered a new bat to the first player to hit a ball over its thatched roof. Occasional nights out—at dinner-parties, restaurants, and one or two plays and films—are recorded in June. And there was a brief but happy visit to Cambridge, to his old and faithful friend Q.

On July 3rd there was another ceremony and another speech, when Barrie, Lord Balfour, and Rudyard Kipling were admitted as Honorary Freemen and Liverymen of the Stationers' Company. The speech harked back to that old, inverted interpretation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and for once seems a little uneasy. Yet it is remembered that when the speaker returned, a day or two later, to sign the Company's roll, the trouble he took and the charm he displayed were of a very particular and exceptional brand.

At the beginning of the last week in July he again transferred his headquarters to Stanway, and again there was the six weeks' house-party. Nearly forty names in the list this year, as friends of all categories came and went. The Winters were there, of course. Jack and Gerrie and their children. Nicholas and Mary, though still only secretly engaged. Gilmour and Whibley. The Boucicaults. The Galsworthys. The Granville-Barkers. Walter de la Mare. Sir Douglas Shields. Elizabeth Lucas. And so on. The games and the walks. A play, on Simon's birthday, written and rehearsed by the host, and acted by the children, with the audience reinforced by a large number of special guests for the day. An undoubted success. The author, indeed, was so delighted with this stage and company that he was already thinking of writing for them again.

But there was also a disaster. Maggie Winter slipped on the polished boards this August, fell, and broke her hip. She couldn't even be moved upstairs, and for six weeks—or until long after the whole house-party had vanished—she lay on a sofa in the old library beyond the drawing-room, until at last she was well enough to be taken home. Barrie overwhelmed with sympathy and rattled almost beyond endurance by this exhausting interruption to his plans. Not that his sister would see a glimpse of impatience, or could have believed in it if she had. It was a strain, though. And felt not only by those most closely concerned.

The Asquiths went abroad in September, and Barrie—leaving his sister on the road to recovery—had a short time in Scotland. Back at the flat by the end of the month, and a resumption of

alternate social engagements and catastrophic colds. Also, of course, of the games and acting with Simon, for whom, as Christmas drew nearer, he became deeply engaged on a short but elaborate five-act play. *Where Was Simon? or The Secret of the Pyramid.* A Christmas melodrama of "Stanway in the Olden Times." The cast, again, to consist of the two little Asquiths and their cousins on Cynthia's side. Production and direction—though his name would be carefully omitted from the programme—by J.M.B.

It was a joke, of course, and a burlesque, but he took it extraordinarily seriously. He was rehearsing *Peter Pan* again, for which Gilbert Miller was providing new scenery, at the Shaftesbury Theatre this time; and in which Miss Dorothy Dickson would move exquisitely and gaily through the part of Peter, Miss Angela du Maurier would again be Wendy, and Lyn Harding would return as Hook. But it is a fact that he was thinking much more about the forthcoming first night at Stanway. He went down there three days before Christmas, started the rehearsals at once; and then there was a very disappointing bit of bad luck. Simon—who was to play the leading and important part of Cocksure the Detective—fell ill. An understudy was quite out of the question. And the whole thing had to be postponed.

For more than three weeks. The rest of the company, though the author was more than ever convinced now of an old opinion that only children should be allowed to act at all, were naturally impatient. Young as they were, this was their holiday, and there were moments when even Barrie must have wished that they were older or more subject to professional discipline. Considerable tension once again at Stanway. Kindness, firmness, stories and games, and then groans—not always concealed or inaudible—at this exasperating and intolerable delay.

But Simon was getting better. A date was fixed—January 16th, 1926—the rehearsals were becoming dress rehearsals, the audience of friends and relations had received its fresh instructions, and *Where Was Simon?* was at last triumphantly performed no less than three late afternoons running. Barrie in torture and agony throughout, for it was no game to him by this time, whatever he had thought beforehand or would think again as soon as the strain was relaxed. But all three audiences were enchanted. The children were at once deliciously stage-struck and thankful that it was all over. And the gracious, long-suffering, and, as always, angelically

unselfish Lady Wemyss could at last move the ordinary furniture back into the hall.

There had been another juvenile performance, a few days earlier, at the Savoy Theatre. The children of various actors and actresses had given a special representation, in the cause of charity, of *The Admirable Crichton*. The hero and heroine appeared to be almost literally on the heroic scale, for they were far taller than anyone else in the cast. But it was all great fun—not only for the surprisingly competent players—and it was a pity that the author was unable to hide in a box. However, he was hiding at the Haymarket on January 21st, when *Mary Rose* was revived with Miss Fay Compton and Leon Quartermaine, and the absolutely essential Miss Jean Cadell. A good reception, and a good send-off by the Press; but for some reason only a comparatively short run.

In February, after many months of secrecy and patience, Nico's engagement was announced. He had left Oxford last summer, and was now learning about business in the City, with a view to a real job and salary before long. His own choice, but of course there had been valuable backing, and would be more when it was needed. Meanwhile, he was still a constant and enlivening resident at the flat.

There was another story being written for Cynthia's second nursery volume in March. *The Blot on Peter Pan*. Neil comes into it again, and there are moments when he is still Michael Davies. But it is a gayer story than its predecessor, and this time there was no need to call it an Interlude for Parents. It appeared, at the appropriate season, in *The Treasure Ship*, and the blot was revealed as nothing more shameful or startling than Peter's—or perhaps Simon's—cockiness. A trifle, with a line or two of hidden tragedy. But oddly lacking in the real quality. Not careless, exactly, but on several pages distinctly off-hand.

At Easter, which fell early in April, Barrie was down at Stanway again, where the original company gave two more performances of *Where Was Simon?* And in this month, also, the Australian cricketers returned, with the great Collins as their captain, to play in forty-five matches, which were, however, considerably marred by bad weather and illness. On April 20th they were entertained at the Criterion Restaurant by the London District of the British Institute of Journalists; the Prime Minister, who was accompanied by Mrs.

Baldwin, proposed their united healths; and Barrie followed with the toast of "Cricket." This was his subject if you like, and though the speech was a short one, it was punctuated, according to the Press reports, by thirty-six outbursts of laughter, as well as several tributes described as Cheers and Loud Cheers. It was funny, impudent, full of personalities, and nobody else could possibly have made it. It rushed round the world to Australia, and there was more laughter when it arrived. The distance decreased as the echo returned. That quite seriously and however strangely, was part of its very real value.

His birthday this year was publicly overshadowed by the nine days' General Strike. It is remembered in *The Times* office, and was mentioned in his obituary, how he appeared one evening at midnight to watch its miniature edition being put to bed; for by now there can be no question that he was on very special terms with *The Times*. Its editor had become one of his honoured and almost intimate friends. He approved its majesty, in a world where so many other newspapers were constantly betraying the old standards. It didn't always represent his own views, but he and it were both at the top of their respective trees. It was the obvious and only official medium for any announcements that he had to make. He courted it, as he courted no other organ, though he was still conscious that its combined intelligence was no more remarkable than his own. He approached it, as a matter of fact, with pride rather than humility, and undoubtedly expected it to do what it was told. Yet all the time he remembered the *Nottingham Journal*. Secretly he was still just a little awed.

The regular annual dinner with Cynthia took place at the Savoy, and afterwards he walked back with her to Regent's Park through the curiously empty streets, where omnibuses were being driven by amateurs, and policemen were sitting beside them in case they should be attacked. Then, three days later, the interruption was all over, and England—jolted but uninjured—picked up its rhythm again. And Barrie was sixty-six.

At the end of the month he joined the Asquiths for a few days, at a bungalow that they had taken near Margate. On June 23rd he attended the Encaenia at Oxford put on a cap and gown again, was addressed in Latin, and given an honorary D. Litt. On the following Tuesday—June 29th—after a night as Lord Northbourne's guest at Betteshanger, he attended Nico's wedding. Peter was Best Man, of course, and afterwards the bridal pair set off on a honeymoon which

took in both Eilean Shona and Scourie. In July there were more rehearsals, for a revival, again with Mme. Karsavina, of *The Truth About the Russian Dancers*, as the first part of a double bill at the Savoy. As usual the author was still altering and in this case abbreviating the text, and turned up regularly to smoke, to look on, and very, very occasionally to utter a few words. But he didn't wait for the first public performance at the end of the month. He was back at Stanway, for the sixth summer tenancy, and already the guests were beginning to arrive. Headed by Lord Wemyss himself. Or in another sense by the Winters and the Gilmours. Jack and Gerrie Davies, with children. Lord and Lady Desborough. Lady Dufferin. Algernon and Lady Guendolen Cecil. Elizabeth Lucas. The Freybergs. The Galsworthys. Lord and Lady Cave. Lady Irvine, as she had now become, from St. Andrews, with more children. Norman Forbes. Desmond MacCarthy. And Mme. Karsavina, in her other capacity as Mrs. H. J. Bruce, with her husband and son. Others, too, both old and new, and one needn't say by this time what games were played, nor who disappeared so often with the children in order to tell them stories. Michael and Simon Asquith, and for the fourth year in succession—though somehow they were crowded out of previous lists—their admirable nurse's two nephews, Dick and Bobbie Faulkner. This at every Stanway summer now was the gang that Barrie slipped off to join. The Faulkners' father was chauffeur during these festivals, with a hired car, and they all lived together, with Mrs. Faulkner, in the Inigo Jones gate-house. A mixture of feudalism and socialism which suited the head of the whole party down to the ground.

But of course, as this was a Test Match summer, the Australians must come over from Cheltenham—where an August fixture seemed now almost to have been arranged for this purpose. And so they did, on Sunday, August 8th. The whole lot of them. And three of them—H. L. Collins, C. G. Macartney, and A. A. Mailey—stayed on for the night. Some doubt, for a moment, about Macartney. It was clear that he wanted to stay, and clear also that he and Barrie were each completely under the other's spell; but he had promised, he said, to finish a letter to his wife, for the Australian mail. That was a challenge, though he didn't yet know it. Barrie announced that he would write the letter himself; and wrote it; and then cabled to Dot Boucicault, who was on tour in Sydney, telling him to give Mrs. Macartney seats for his plays. Haroun al

Raschid up-to-date. Macartney—irresistible, though he didn't yet know this either, as a hero himself—was completely conquered. Stayed the night. Never forgot it. Entered directly into the inner circle. Returned four years later—alas, only as a chronicler now, for though he seemed fitter than ever, Test Matches demand youth as well—and stepped straight back into his old and honoured place. Then he missed a visit, owing to very intelligible feeling about the "body-line" business. And then it was 1938, and he was here, but Barrie had gone.

One can't help lingering over Macartney, even at the expense of his incomparable colleagues. He made Barrie so extraordinarily happy; and always by being entirely his own stalwart and straightforward self.

Another Hollywood film version of a Barrie play had reached London in the same month. *A Kiss for Cinderella*; still silent, and again with Miss Betty Bronson in the title-rôle. The war had been toned down, and trick shots of film-magic had been added. It was an attempt, nevertheless, to keep within recognisable distance of the original story; but again the American flavour had crept in, too. Something was lost, and always would be for those who remembered Wyndham's Theatre, and Gerald, and little Miss Trevelyan.

As the Stanway season ended, early in September, Cynthia and Beb went abroad again, and Barrie, after a short visit to the Horners at Mells, hurled himself into another Stanway play. *The Wheel*; a vehicle for the same company as last time, but with the addition—the daring and astonishing addition—of Lord Wemyss. Notes for the first version—there are eleven closely-covered pages in the pocket-book that we have just come to—suggest that he had at first planned to include Lady Wemyss as well. But perhaps there were limits to his ascendancy in this household. Or weren't there, when one recalls how little his lordship cared for fantasy or for taking orders; and how he would take them on this occasion even to the extent of dressing up as a clergyman in full canonicals?

The notes also indicate an almost rampageous desire for elaboration this time. There is to be scenery, music, professional lighting effects, and perhaps even a film. The action is to take place not only in front of the audience, but amongst them, and even behind them as well. No hint that in the author's mind the hall at Stanway isn't his own hall, or that all members of the family won't put every-

thing aside to do exactly what they're told. The whole thing has taken such a grip on him that the least absence of enthusiasm is mutiny. There is something almost terrifying in the way that this world-renowned playwright concentrates and focuses everything on an amateur performance by some children and their grandfather. But he does. What was it that Lob said? "It is the thing I wanted, and it isn't good for me not to get the thing I want."

On the other hand he is constantly explaining or giving you to understand that it is the simplicity of this kind of performance that puts it so far above everything on the real stage. To prove this, he will cut some of the elaboration—his own elaboration—with a sudden air of indignant disgust. All very confusing for the immediate onlookers, as they yield once more to the extraordinary spell. Barrie and the children's plays at Stanway. There is a whole volume of history and psychology in this one subject alone.

Cynthia first heard of *The Wheel* at the beginning of October. She was abroad again this autumn—while Elizabeth Lucas took over her job, and while Barrie had another brief illness—and first had it read to her at the end of November. Some of it was remarkably queer and baffling, and would always remain so. It was never easy, either—can you imagine its being easy?—to follow such a reading with the right words of praise. But of course there was no question of its not being acted, whatever the difficulties or domestic disruption in her old home. An inspired tyrant had settled it all. *The Wheel* must take precedence over everything during the Stanway Christmas holidays, with the author, of course, in complete and unconditional control.

Thus it was arranged, because Barrie wanted it, and also—to be quite fair—because it was bound to include a tremendous amount of excitement and fun. Meanwhile, there was one of the now much rarer trips to Paris, and then he was watching rehearsals at the Adelphi, for the twenty-third year of *Peter Pan*. Miss Dorothy Dickson as Peter again, Alfred Drayton as Hook, and four of the original pirates—including the one and only George Shelton, now seventy-six when off the stage—returning once more to the scenes they knew so well. On the day after the opening performance, or two days before Christmas, the author arrived at Stanway, where his other company had already assembled, and rehearsals began at once. Lord Wemyss, three grand-daughters, and five grandsons—



the youngest still only four—were all being smoked at, treated with patience, cunning, or sternness, and shown what to do. This again, apparently, was far more important than the stage-children's performance of *Quality Street*, which was now also in preparation for a mid-January matinée at the Savoy. For this was all new, and that, even with the children, was old.

The leading part at Stanway had of course been given to Simon, who was of course word-perfect from the start. But again, and even more disastrously than last Christmas, it was Simon who was taken ill. Seriously ill. Pain, doctors, surgeons, an operation for mastoid, and a long, ghastly struggle, while *The Wheel* was forgotten—except that all the invited guests had to be put off again—and Barrie, distracted and terrified, sat up till dawn for the latest and darkly ominous news.

Cynthia must still turn from her child's bedside to try and steady him, just as he would still produce strength and courage of his own from the very brink of despair. A nightmare of a Christmas holiday; yet presently the worst was withheld. Simon was getting better. Very slowly; but he could leave Stanway now, with its soft, damp air, and be moved to a place that was at least healthy enough, though only a few—such as he and his mother—have discovered its elusive charm. Peacehaven, the bungalow town between Brighton and Newhaven, already sprawling over the windy cliffs. Barrie was down there in February, and quite understood, apparently, that the games must now consist almost entirely of playing at operations. Morbid? Not a bit of it. Not when two children—aged seven and nearly sixty-seven—are having fun with a tin opener or a potato-peeler.

In March there was a joint visit, with the Asquiths, to the Leconfields at Petworth. By the end of the month Simon had left Peacehaven, in a very much better state of health, and plans were going ahead again for further rehearsals of *The Wheel*. Barrie went down to Stanway at the beginning of April, for at least a fortnight's preparation, but still there were anxieties not only connected with the play. The deaths of two more friends; Sir John Horner and Sir Ernest Hodder-Williams. As Lady Horner wrote, in her book of personal memories, it was after this that she and Barrie were drawn much more closely together. He had stayed with her often enough already, there had been both admiration and affection for her husband, and as Katherine Asquith's mother she must of course,

and always, have a very special niche. But it was from now onwards, and from very true friendship, that he took to inviting himself regularly to her house. At Mells he could always do exactly what he liked; he could share in the family background, and take the same kind of interest in the village and its villagers that he had gradually developed at Stanway. He was also a church-goer at Mells, where Canon Hannay—more widely known, perhaps, as George A. Birmingham—was at this time rector. At Stanway it was more his habit to invite the delightful incumbent—the Rev. H. B. Allen—to dinner; but both these clergymen were real and valued friends. Again one would like to linger, and quote anecdotes, but the canvas is still so thickly crowded, and again one must pass on. You are not forgotten, though, all you other friends, whom Barrie charmed, chained, neglected, and then suddenly captured again. Of course, you are all here somewhere in these pages, even if you can't find your names.

The other loss was even sadder in a way, for Ernest Hodder-Williams was still only fifty when he died. A publisher with very great gifts, and a most lovable and attractive man. "Dear Brothers," Barrie would always write now, whenever he was communicating with the two surviving partners in the firm. We have told you how he never met them, never entered their office, and gradually became so proud of this that he was determined to carry it through to the end. But for their own as well as for Ernest's sake he had a real feeling of affection for them. They had inherited far more from their grandfather—the original Hodder of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton—than the right to publish his books and plays.

Back to Stanway and *The Wheel*. Barrie in bed with a cold. Barrie up again—in spite of an almost red-hot poultice applied, with the very best intentions, by Lord Wemyss—but showing renewed signs of stress and strain. Barrie again wondering why the children should ever want to do anything but rehearse. Barrie, with a professional stage-director from London, carrying out lighting experiments until two o'clock in the morning. Barrie showing his exhausted amateur assistants how to set and shift the scenery. Barrie distinctly near the end of his own tether, up one moment, down the next, but still in indomitable and merciless command. And so to the first of the three performances, on Monday, April 18th. *The Wheel—a play for Eight Children and their Grandpapa*. And one

can't help wishing that it were rather easier to tell you what it was all about.

The Synopsis of Scenes might help, though. So here it is:

Act 1. BACHELOR DAYS.

Act 2. THROUGH THE WHEEL.

Scene 1. 10, Downing Street.

Scene 2. Falters between the Forest of Arden and a Wood near Athens.

Scene 3. A Balcony in Verona.

Scene 4. A Quiet Evening at Glamis.

Act 3. THE RETURN.

Two points seem moderately clear at once. First, that the formula, such as it was, resembled the formula of *Dear Brutus*—with preparation for the entry into a world of magic, the world itself, and what happens afterwards. Secondly, that it owes even more than *Dear Brutus* to Shakespeare. It does; or it did. Shakespeare, in fact, had provided a considerable amount of the dialogue. But then there were also the personal references and jokes, for all the characters were supposed, in some dream-like and fantastic manner, to be their real selves. And in addition there were thick slices of Barrie, with no one to keep him under any sort of control, which were baffling, enchanting, and then utterly bewildering again. The members of the three audiences were aware that this was no ordinary amateur performance, for when Barrie was present—even though invisible—there was a powerful atmosphere of almost religious awe. Perhaps this helps to explain why the second representation, from which he was absent on other business, was the most successful and received with far the most enthusiasm. For one has to say that at these Stanway theatricals he was again two rather incongruous characters at once. The boy who hadn't grown up, and the illustrious author who was unbending for some mystical purpose of his own. He meant you to feel honoured. There were nearly always courtiers now to scowl if they detected anyone smiling in the wrong place. The correct procedure was undoubtedly to subdue all vulgar signs of approval or amusement, though you were allowed and expected to applaud.

Strain, therefore, not only behind the scenes but in the front of the house as well. Yet something, as you knew well enough already,

that you would never be likely to forget. And moments, of course, even with the very mild amount of theatrical illusion, that were touching, or haunting, with the old, irresistible appeal. For various reasons however, *The Wheel*, in the Easter holidays of 1927, was the last of the full-dress Stanway plays. There would be plenty of acting still, either without an audience or for whatever audience happened to be staying in the house. But none of these intensive preparations, long rehearsals, printed programmes, and professional effects. The summit of this kind of game had now been reached; if, indeed, in this final manifestation, it could still be regarded as a game at all. No doubt, in a sense, that the world should consist entirely of large country houses with clever and attractive children in them, for whom one should do nothing but write and rehearse play after play. But it didn't. And already the eldest of the Stanway children were beginning to rush through their 'teens. It was fifty years since *Bandalero the Bandit* and twenty-six since *The Greedy Dwarf*. *The Wheel* had concluded the cycle; gloriously, and with the most distinguished of all audiences. But the next game, if any, must be something else.

The Asquiths were guests at the flat again for six weeks from the beginning of May. Birthday dinner, says Cynthia's record, at the Ritz. Lots of reading aloud in the evenings. Shakespeare, mostly. But this was also the year when Barrie's private reading turned so violently towards Trollope; not only the Barchester novels, but anything else that he could find. Had his friends read *Phineas Finn*? They hadn't. Then they must read it at once. Even Emily Brontë, the chief favourite of all, took second place for the time being; lacking, as she did, an almost inexhaustible supply of unknown works. But she would come back again. Trollope might have a long and triumphant season. But Emily would still be there, and unassailable, when he had gone.

This year Cynthia was editing two volumes of collected contributions, one for children and the other for amateurs of murder. Barrie, of course, was invited to share in both. But he had finished with Neil, it would seem, and had nothing else for the children. The criminologists, however, were supplied with the first published version of *Shall We Join the Ladies*? Again one may perhaps reflect that ordinary private secretaries could hardly expect such luck. And immediately afterwards that this had nothing to do with the case.

On June 4th—which in this connection would more suitably be

described as the Fourth of June—he attended the celebrations at Eton, as guest of the Provost, Dr. Montague James. We know, of course, that it was well over two years since he had written about Captain Hook as an Etonian, and we shall never know whether it was chance or cunning that brought up this topic again. In any event it was mentioned, and a further inspiration followed at once. Barrie engaged himself to reappear—a month later, on the eve of the Eton and Harrow match—and deliver his article to the First Hundred\* in the form of an address. All but five years since his direct connection with the school had been severed, and no one else, surely, would have chosen as his subject the imaginary history of a character whom he had invented himself. But though a little revision would be necessary, for of course it must now appear that he had had this particular audience in mind all along, there was no qualms this time, and he spent the interval in anything but retreat from the world. His sister and brother-in-law were now staying with him—with the hired piano that was mentioned before. He was dining out; going down to see friends in the country; he joined the Asquiths at Margate, and watched the cricket at Michael's school. He set off on another visit, where he took immense interest and pleasure in an eclipse. But of course he hadn't forgotten Captain Hook, and on July 7th he rose up in the school library at Eton, to the complete satisfaction of everyone concerned. Another triumph and a very special one, as the boys hung on his preposterous revelations, and then crowded round him afterwards until he disappeared from sight. Next day he was at Lord's, of course, and the whole discourse was printed—as he had arranged—in *The Times*. Two and a half columns, beginning in that exclusive position to the right of the leader page. A joke, now, for far more than the First Hundred, by a national jester and sage. A tribute to himself, as one can't help seeing, as well as to the greatest of all schools. That was the method though, among others. And *The Times* was still ready enough to play its own dignified part.

It was in this month that the Bernard Shaws left 10, Adelphi Terrace, and moved a little further up the river to the greater convenience and modernity of Whitehall Court. The Galsworthys had gone nine years ago, and Granville-Barker had vanished from John Street some time before that. Now Barrie would be the only

\* The First Hundred is, for once, quite a straightforward Etonian expression. It merely means the first hundred boys in the school, from the Captain downwards.

Adelphian from the pre-war Repertory group; but he wasn't thinking of leaving himself. There were recurrent rumours—they had started already—of so called improvements or developments; in other words that all the old Adam buildings were going to be pulled down. But his own lease had still quite a number of years to run, and it was noticed that he always denied reports about the rest of the estate, whatever the newspapers might say. From faith and obstinacy rather than from inside knowledge; though it almost seemed, sometimes, as if the will-power of this one elusive resident were more powerful than the vast interests that it was determined to defy. Yet in the end it could only be a rearguard action, for all that.

The Asquiths returned to the flat for the last part of July, and then, once more, there was a general migration to Stanway. Between thirty and forty guests again, with Miss Ruth Draper, Sir Owen Seaman, and Robert Nichols among the newcomers. Golf-croquet and shuffleboard still going as strong as ever. A number of picnics. Sports and a croquet-tournament for the staff. The host in constant attendance at the village cricket matches. And a certain amount of to-and-fro between Stanway and Broadway, where the de Navarros were still firmly established, and Lady Lewis had also taken a house for the summer.

All the usual kindness and despotism, and the usual unpredictable variation in spirits and health. Cynthia still the châtelaine and companion, but considerably occupied, whenever she could escape, with further literary labours of her own. She had been commissioned to write a book about her Royal Highness the Duchess of York—whose semi-official annalist she would now remain—and was working pretty strenuously against time. That isn't an irrelevance, quite apart from the indication of her secretarial versatility. For Barrie was interested, not merely because he had been born within five miles of Glamis, and it was through his secretary that he would presently be entertaining both the Duke and Duchess himself.

Meanwhile, he interrupted this seventh Stanway summer-holiday for rehearsals of *Barbara's Wedding*, which Robert Loraine was presenting, together with a version of Strindberg's *The Father*, at the Savoy. The last, as you remember, of the Echoes of the War. A fine part for Loraine, somewhat in the tradition of Irving's Corporal Brewster, and effective support, as Barbara, from Miss Maisie Darrell. But too much sentiment? Hard to say, when the

play had been planned for so different a public mood. There were tears in the front of the house, on August 23rd, but there was a certain amount of uneasy irritation, too. Nearly nine years after the Armistice there were tones in this particular echo that must seem false to some, and very faint and far away to others. The double bill was praised and drew its own enthusiasts, but had a very short run.

From Stanway Barrie returned to the flat, while Cynthia and Beb went abroad again, and was instantly laid low with a new and persistent kind of headache, diagnosed as rheumatic. He was in bed nearly all September, but time or treatment effected a complete cure. By the beginning of October his secretary was back, and both had resumed the usual autumn routine. Correspondence, quiet evenings together every now and then, and Sunday teas at Sussex Place for more acting and games with Simon. On October 12th he was a Best Man again, when Charles Whibley—whose first wife had died seven years ago—was married to Sir Walter Raleigh's only daughter, at St. Michael's Church, Cornhill. A very suitable rôle—though a little complicated, of course, by the necessity of hiding from any cameras—for in the short time available he had become very nearly as fond of the bride's father as of the bridegroom whom he had first met forty years ago.

On the same evening a translation of *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, under the title of *Vieille Maman*, was successfully presented at the Comédie Française. Not by any means the first Barrie play to be performed in French. But the first time that any living British author had been honoured in this particular way.

At the end of the month there was a week-end—one of the many at which the Asquiths were also guests—with Lord and Lady Salisbury at Hatfield. Somehow the party found itself playing guessing games; but of course it is easy enough to guess why. Then came one of the bad autumn colds again, which occupied most of November. The first week-end in December was spent with Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin at Chequers; which accounts—if it is still there, as it certainly was until quite recently—for the postage-stamp on the ceiling of the big, square hall. As a return for this hospitality, Barrie invited his host and hostess to a rehearsal of *Peter Pan*, and was careful to inform the Prime Minister—though in direct contravention of the L.C.C. rules—that he would be allowed to smoke. But he wasn't present on this occasion himself, for he was in bed again with another short, sharp chill.

The theatre, this year, was the Gaiety, and the new Peter was Miss Jean Forbes-Robertson, who would now play the same part, at every revival, for the next seven years. She was a new Peter in more ways than one. As unearthly as Miss Boucicault, in her own manner. An actress who had apparently never heard of such a thing as a Principal Boy. A little too sinister at times? That would always be a matter of opinion, which in turn, for so many, would be confused by memories of the other Peters whom they had seen. The part, as must be said once more, can never conceivably be more than a compromise on the actual stage. But at least Miss Forbes-Robertson had tackled it again, from the very beginning, with intelligence, with sensibility, and all her other inherited gifts. Those eight consecutive years, moreover, show clearly enough what the author thought of her. He also altered the play for her, or the alteration swiftly followed her first appearance in the part. For previous Peters had been human enough to be embraced without the least disturbance in any spectator's mind. But henceforward, it was decided, no Peter must even be touched. Why not? A cold and uncomfortable thought for some of the children in front. Was this Barrie's own, growing taste for isolation, or a tribute to the special characteristics of his new star? Whichever it was, the new lines were added, old lines and business were ruthlessly cut, and in the first published edition—which would appear in the following year—the change would be authorised and established for good.

Well, it was his play still, even though it was now twenty-three years old. He could still do what he liked with it, and bring it, if he chose, more into sympathy or alignment with his present mood. Perhaps, after all, the new children would notice nothing. Perhaps it would be only their elders who must always feel now that a little of the warmth had gone. It was alive still, anyhow. Very much alive. And still one of the most valuable properties on the English-speaking stage.

This Christmas season was also the first at which the dress-rehearsal was thrown open to the poorer London children as the author's guests. That was on December 22nd, and Barrie was there to hear their yells and shrieks of joy. Then he set off for his own Christmas at Stanway. It is remembered that in some of the acting that took place there he impersonated the Old and then the New Year.



On January 11th, 1928, Thomas Hardy—eighty-seven last summer—died at his home on the outskirts of Dorchester. He had been ill for just a month, and at first there had been no more than natural anxiety on account of his frailty and age. But since Christmas it had been clear that this was to be the end. Barrie went down there on his return from Stanway, to offer whatever help he could, and thought it better, for some reason, to enter the premises by the back door. His hero heard of this afterwards, and was touched and amused. But he had been too ill to see him at the time, and after a last, brief rally, he sank quickly, and at nine o'clock on that January evening the final page was turned.

Barrie was informed by telephone at once, and on the following morning called on the Dean of Westminster to ask for an Abbey burial. Nineteen years ago he had joined in the same request on behalf of another dead hero, and it had been refused. This time it was granted at once. But there was still an unlooked-for complication. Hardy, it seemed, had asked that he should be buried with his family and first wife in the churchyard at Stinsford. Meanwhile, Barrie had been collecting pall-bearers for the Abbey, and was naturally reluctant to make excuses to the Dean. In a welter of writing, telephoning, and journeying to and fro, a strange compromise was reached. Hardy's heart should be placed in a separate casket and buried at Stinsford, while the rest of his remains should be cremated and brought to Westminster. Through all this, J.M.B. combined incessant activity and, of course, the most genuine sorrow with a masterful and possessive air towards the widow. Heaven alone knows what he didn't promise to do for her, and mean to do for her, in those days. Heaven also knows that it was another impulse that he would frequently regret. Not that he broke his pledge—which would shortly involve a great deal of assistance in the two-volume biography that she had already begun writing; but his piety had undoubtedly landed him with a very considerable burden. There appeared to be a growing impression on Mrs. Hardy's part that he was doing everything, or almost everything, for her own sake. He couldn't possibly say he wasn't, and nothing would induce him to let her down. But there were some groans lying ahead, one fears, in this fresh and painful aspect of real life. So easy to have dodged them if only he could have forgotten the fifty years of hero-worship and what he must still consider a sacred duty. But he couldn't. He would suffer, if necessary, and perhaps

make others suffer, too. But he couldn't betray the memories that still meant so much.

George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and J. M. Barrie. Three of them once. Then two. And now only one. Sad yet proud thoughts in the midst of the turmoil. The one who was left knew well enough to whom the other two had always belonged.

The names of the pall-bearers were announced on January 14th. They included two Prime Ministers—Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald—Barrie himself, Kipling, Shaw, Galsworthy, and A. E. Housman. Two days later the Abbey was crowded as these men moved slowly up the long aisle, paused for the ceremonial service, and then turned towards Poets' Corner. G.B.S. noticed something, and described it long afterwards. "But Barrie," he said, "was the most impressive of all of us." And then, after the briefest pause: "He made himself smaller than ever."

Those who remember will recognise the truth here, or at least the truth as it appeared to the human eye. He always seemed smallest when he was most dignified. The smallest and, this day, far the saddest. But he had seen that his hero was fitly honoured. And then, when it was all over, he took charge of Mrs. Hardy again.

A season of mourning had returned. Lord Haig died suddenly, in London, at the end of January. A fortnight later, Lord Oxford, whose health had been failing for some time, died in his home by the river, at Sutton Courtney. He had asked to be buried privately and quietly, but his closer friends gathered in the village churchyard, and Barrie was among them. Two men whom he had admired, and loved as well, had passed out of the story. And on the eve of Lord Oxford's funeral he had learnt of another loss. Death, at Strath View—to which he set off on the following morning—of his sister-in-law, Mrs. A. O. Barrie, at the age of seventy-two. She had been more than kind to him in his boyhood, and no one could say that she hadn't been more than repaid. Now there was another procession to the cemetery on the Hill, and another return to the house of so much history and sadness. Barrie very quiet, and thoughtful, and helpful, for the rest of his short visit. But there was also another memory, and then a revival, from the past.

"*Friendship* subject," says the note-book. "(Suggested by meeting again with James Robb.)" For this was when it happened. Sixty years ago they had played together—it was Robb who had acted with him in the little wash-house, and Robb who had come running to

tell him of the old man who had cut his throat—but if there had been meetings in the interval, it would seem that they had passed without any special significance. Now, however, a wave of genuine sentiment returned. Barrie and his old friend walked and talked together. "Do you remember?" they asked each other, and for a moment the days of their childhood seemed to come rushing back. Robb reminded him of a secret whistle with which they had once signalled to each other, and presently—there in Caddam Wood—they were whistling again. There, also, on Robb's upper lip, was the scar—very romantic, this—where Barrie had once accidentally cut it with a spade. How could one hang on to all this? How could one make it last? There was a haze round Kirriemuir, but it was a golden haze now, even in the bitter month of February. And James Robb, it seemed, was one who knew this also, who understood, and suddenly—though he, too, was nearly seventy, and had turned into an ironmonger—a glamour shone from his memories as well. He must come up to London and stay at the flat. It was essential, now that they had found each other again. When could he come? This summer? The magic allowed him no alternative, and indeed it was an offer that no one in Kirriemuir would have dreamt of refusing. It was also an impulse, of course; touching, but none the less as liable as others to create something of a problem when the time came. But it was all arranged, and Barrie went back to the Adelphi to tell of his great discovery, and to imply, at least, that Robb was one of the most remarkable men on earth. Also, or at any rate for the time being, he was thinking more and more of Kirriemuir. His visit had shown no flaws in it. It was his own little town. It knew this, and of course, now, he had always known it too.

On Wednesday, February 29th, there was another speech. Second annual dinner of the Worcestershire Association, at the Hotel Victoria, honoured by the presence of the Prince of Wales, and with the Prime Minister—which explains the temporary connection between Barrie and Worcestershire—in the Chair. A short, funny speech, accompanied by much business with the cigar; including several jokes about Mr. Baldwin's pipe; and ending, once more—for of course there must be a touch of autobiography, too—with the old story of how he had lost his smile. A very successful evening, and in spite of the distinguished opposition an almost complete

scoop of the headlines next day. But this—for there is nothing as powerful as Loud laughter—was becoming almost automatic by now.

An announcement which appeared in the Press on March 3rd. "Sir James Barrie has accepted the invitation of the Incorporated Society of Authors to become their President, in succession to Mr. Thomas Hardy. He has been a member since 1891. Sir James Barrie is the fourth President of the society, which was founded in 1884. The first President was Lord Tennyson and the second George Meredith."

Leaving Lord Tennyson out of it, one sees how direct and continuous the succession had been. It's a curious society, for in a sense it is the professional trade union—at any rate there is no other—but its members are all professional individualists, all rivals, and unquestionably incapable of organising a strike. Nevertheless, it can point to notable victories—though some have been rather Pyrrhic—over harsh or wicked publishers, it is always ready to offer advice, and its large Council is almost another British Academy, too. Its presidency is certainly a very high honour, and the choice this time, if obvious, was a true compliment to the second and third Presidents' friend. He was pleased. He had been expecting it, but he was both pleased and proud. It would involve at least one speech—for which he was making notes already—but no one knew better that authors, however alarming and sometimes repulsive in large numbers, were still the salt of the earth. He would do this much for them gladly enough, and far more, of which only the actual beneficiaries would if possible ever know. But the speech to the Authors' Society doesn't come next. The notes—so neatly and carefully entered now in the left-handed writing—fall under three or four headings on a single page. Some of the ideas will be transferred in the end, but there are going to be five more speeches this year.

Other work too, now, for the big desk still stands there, and the oftener he sits down to it, the more something like the old bouts of industry will return. Hodder and Stoughton—which with Barrie will always imply Scribner's also—are at last to be allowed to publish the play of *Peter Pan*. This not only means that the text must be sifted out of a prompt-copy, and then considerably revised, but now—as the author lingers over this task—that he will remember its origins, and take up his pen again. The prefatory Dedication, with its tribute to the five little Davieses, its quotations from *The Boy*

*Castaways*, and its further fragments of autobiography, is well under way by the end of March. But more collation and correction are to follow. For the two publishers aren't only to issue *Peter Pan* by itself in October, but as the first of *The Plays of J. M. Barrie*—twenty of them, long and short—a month later. The canon is being defined. It will omit quite as much as it includes, and if twenty were for some reason to be the limit, no one else, perhaps, would have chosen exactly the same list. One may take it, however, as representing the author's preference among his own plays in the spring of 1928. And it is true enough that although the omissions would make a very interesting volume, he has certainly skimmed most of the cream. He meant the selection to be final, and as far as he was concerned it remained so until the end. Nor would there be any other prefaces. He was now writing the first and the last.

He came down to see the Asquiths at Peacehaven just after Easter. He was back at the flat and in bed with a cold again. At the end of April there was a week-end at Stanway. On May 9th—his sixty-eighth birthday—he entertained Simon at lunch, and Cynthia at dinner. Another week-end, ten days later, with Mary Herbert—Cynthia's cousin and friend—at her house in Somerset; and again a souvenir in the shape of a postage-stamp on the ceiling. In June he had visitors; his sister and brother-in-law for the usual fortnight; and James Robb. A strange host, as one has to say again. So pressing beforehand; so convinced afterwards—or nearly always—that all had gone off as it should. But at the time—Well, sometimes he was hospitality itself, sometimes it was quite obvious that the presence of guests was almost more than he could stand, and sometimes he actually left them on the premises—with every injunction to enjoy themselves—and ran away. Never, of course, without some ostensibly adequate excuse. But it was quite clear that he had gone. So he left the Winters for a little while this June, to join the Asquiths in Kent, and to watch more cricket at Michael's school. And perhaps it would have been better if he had left poor Robb—who arrived with the gift of the Kirriemuir canary, which was then called Robb, too, and developed (though chiefly under tuition from Mrs. Stanley) those touching and remarkable characteristics; for their reminiscences languished after the first few days, the visitor knew no one else in London, and an impulse had undoubtedly turned into something like a boomerang again. But

duty, this time, must be stronger than any temptation. The host remained a host. And almost as soon as his old friend had gone—bearing with him, partly, perhaps, as yet another act of expiation, a letter to the Kirriemuir Town Council offering them the gift of a cricket and football pavilion—Barrie was again telling everyone how admirable and incomparable he was. Already, also, he was genuinely looking forward to seeing him again. Aren't boys like this sometimes, when they have their friends home from school? We know they are; and so, in his own, peculiar way, was J.M.B.

In the same month a replica of Sir George Frampton's Peter Pan statue, presented by a local benefactor to the city of Liverpool, was unveiled, with considerable ceremony and something in the nature of a pageant, in Sefton Park. Barrie contributed a telegram, and was represented, as one might say, by his eldest niece. But he didn't appear in person. He had his guests, his own methods of escaping them, and he was busy and burdened with another speech.

Wednesday, June 21st. Annual dinner to the Rhodes Scholars at Oxford, with Gcoffrey Dawson—editor of *The Times* and one of the trustees—in the Chair. Barrie proposed the Scholars' health, in what was instantly and correctly described as his characteristic manner. Within a few moments he had produced another imaginary figure, with the name of William K. Brown, who was the direct if invisible object of the rest of the address. He followed his career—not omitting some references to his own—and gave him some very sound advice. Indeed, he was both sincere and serious, though he couldn't help being whimsical—unfortunately, there is no other word for it—as well. The scholars, at any rate, were delighted, and had no idea, as speaker followed speaker, that Barrie was now on the verge of his customary post-oratorical state of collapse. It would be several days, at the best, before he regained what he had given out. It had to be. For this sort of task there was still only the one method, and no other could be employed.

On June 23rd Nico and Mary's daughter, Laura, was born. Three little Davieses of the third generation now; but none to inherit what their fathers had known. Too young? Or was it always the mother who held the real key, and must Barrie always have chosen her himself? Something in that, perhaps. At any rate it was still the little Asquiths—though Michael was nearly fourteen and would be

at Winchester soon—who were holding that part of the inheritance. There was no sign of any successor here.

In July Miss Ellen Terry—eighty-one last February—died at the little house near Tenterden, where Barrie and Frohman had once called on her in the summer before the production of *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*. Twenty-four years ago already. Twenty-six years since her final break with Irving and the Lyceum. Memories, for Barrie, going far further back than that, and ending with true friendship on both sides. Yet she had been old, and tired, and nearly blind. The sadness now could only be for oneself, and for the tragedy of time.

Stanway again. The eighth summer tenancy. And again the gathering of guests. The Winters. Jack Davies and his family. Birrell and Whibley. Sir Donald Maclean. Professor L. P. Jacks. Mrs. Hardy, with typescript and proof-sheets of the biography. Sydney Cockerell. Elizabeth Lucas. The Galsworthys, the Scribners, the Cecils, and the A. P. Herberts. Games as usual; late afternoon walks; special acting on Simon Asquith's birthday. Charles Scribner was discussing a new American uniform edition, which would appear presently in his own market. On August 11th there was the first foreshadowing of another speech; or, rather, of a speech that was already in the offing becoming two instead of one.

There had been a plan for some months now of going north this autumn, and speaking at Jedburgh on Mary Queen of Scots. Those old and true friends, the Olivers, had presented the house where she was known to have stayed, as a gift to the town. There was to be a bazaar to raise funds for its upkeep, and Barrie, who had promised to open it, had been making notes on his romantic heroine ever since. Now came another letter from Edgerston offering, on behalf of the provost and burgesses, the Freedom of Jedburgh as a compliment in return. It was accepted at once—and gratefully, though this still wasn't the town that counted for most of all. So that was why there would be two speeches in the middle of October, though already there were enough notes for six. Don't think there wasn't compression still. It was three-quarters of the secret of that easy, leisurely, spontaneous effect.

On August 19th, Lord Haldane—who had recently been elected Chancellor of St. Andrews in succession to Lord Haig—died, only three years after his centenarian mother. He had been seventy-two in July. The end of another very real friendship, in London and

Scotland. His was one of the photographs that would always hang in the study of the Adelphi flat. A man who had suffered enormous public injustice, but had never grown embittered. A shy man, with a heart. Barrie had loved him, and would miss him. Something else was lost, and had gone.

The tenancy and house-party ended, as usual, at the beginning of September, and while Cynthia went abroad again, he paid some other visits and worked away at his speeches. The two for Jedburgh; another for the Society of Authors; and a fourth—the notes are all mixed up now—for the St. Andrew's Day festival of the Royal Scottish Corporation, a benevolent society for exiles in London, at which he had promised to preside.

On Wednesday, October 10th, he went north to the Olivers' at Edgerston—the first visit, though never for want of invitations, since the year before Michael's death—spent the night there, and opened the bazaar on the following day. The speech, very widely reported, has the real magic in it, the playfulness, the boyishness, as well as the sincerity in its appeal to national emotion and pride. One of the best, and certainly one of the best audiences, for everything went right that day. He was in complete control here. There was no formality to dull or delay the carefully-prepared effects. Scotland, and particularly a small Scotch town, could always add an extra quality to his own. A very fine performance, and a most memorable afternoon. There was an auction after the speech, conducted by the Chairman, the Duke of Roxburghe, at which Barrie displayed the most spirited generosity again. The bazaar was a triumph. And the old Manor House, in which a Queen—at this moment the only Queen—had once stayed, was safely secured with the endowment for which its donor had asked, and to which he had contributed too.

A happy beginning to a happy visit. A pause for the quieter side of friendship, and then—on the following Monday afternoon of October 15th—the guest returned to the Jedburgh Public Hall to receive his Freedom. As this was Scotland, the proceedings opened with prayer. Then the town clerk administered the oath. Then the provost handed over the burgess ticket—in a casket made from a pear-tree in the Manor House garden—with a short, congratulatory address. And then Barrie rose up again and got going. Quite indescribably—though again there was a lot about the Queen of Scots, and F. S. Oliver, and various dignitaries on the platform—but quite enchantingly to an audience that lapped up every word. Another



triumph, in fact. A continuation, if you like, of the former speech, and therefore just a little less surprising. But again delivered with magic, and vast skill. This is what I am really like, was the summary or secret text. And yet, with all the depths under the jokes and laughter, he was still acting. Still watching the figure who was at the same time himself and someone whom he had created. The position could never conceivably be simpler or clearer than that.

It had been announced beforehand that this speech would be broadcast, but though the B.B.C. was now six years old, there were still technical difficulties in this sort of case. Listeners heard the provost, and then little or nothing, and then what you might call bits and pieces. But the cough came through. The cough was broadcast. One wonders if it is still circling somewhere in space.

A banquet, of cake and wine, another very short speech of thanks—but still with the Queen of Scots in it—and Barrie drove back with Cynthia to her mother's little house on the golf-links near Gosford. No reaction yet, this time; he was still on the high tide of the double personal success. But it was coming, of course. They were both aware of that. Some of it seemed to be waiting in the train for London next day, and now it would hang about steadily and heavily for a while. This, sooner or later, was how it must always be.

There was another week-end at Hatfield in November, where some more distinguished guests found themselves playing rather unusual games. Then there was another cold, though fortunately not one of the worse ones. And then came two more speeches in the same week. Annual Dinner of the Society of Authors, on November 28th, at the Hyde Park Hotel, with its Chairman, Lord Gorrell, in the Chair. The new President, who brought Mrs. Hardy as his guest, was reminiscent about himself and about both his predecessors, and there was more magic for those who were lucky enough to be there. A very great evening for the authors, who had seldom assembled in such quantities, and so few of whom had ever seen or heard their President before. A glorious performance, in the more straightforward manner, which for once reads almost as well as it sounded at the time. Not quite; for the voice was always part of the enchantment, and the sadness—the proud sadness on this occasion—of the little figure with its cigar. The authors laughed, and cheered, and felt extraordinarily happy. Then Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson replied for the guests. And then, as is their odd habit after these dinners, the authors all went into another room

and began to dance. But Barrie and Mrs. Hardy had slipped away by then, for one of them had another performance to prepare for the night after next.

The Holborn Restaurant—where Gilmour's friends had dined on the eve of his wedding, just forty years ago. Barrie himself in the Chair now; with a sugar statue of Peter Pan in front of him, and also the ancient "Scots Box" for charitable contributions, which the Royal Scottish Corporation had preserved—though it had twice lost it and then found it again—from its own distant origin in the reign of James I. The Chairman was an authority on boxes, especially on those with a history, and to-night there was much less reminiscence as he delivered an essay on this emblematic relic. Or as he addressed it in person. Or as he interpreted its own thoughts and remarks. Another remarkably effective appearance, and almost in the character of an ordinary chairman—except for the inevitable differences that made it nothing of the sort. A public duty, at any rate, that he had again approached with immense trouble and care, and discharged with dignity and authority as well as with his own special jokes. He knew this job now from beginning to end. He and his M'Connachie had become all but merged into one. It still took it out of him, beforehand and afterwards, and he still thought he hated it a great deal oftener than not. But there had been six speeches this year, and he hadn't finished yet. They were no longer experiments, but it could still be even more fascinating than alarming to discover what he would be standing up and telling an audience next.

A fortnight later a new cold that he caught developed once more into bronchitis, and he was pretty ill this month. Ups and downs of health and spirits, but far more downs than ups. A nurse in the flat, whom he decided to dislike. A doctor who made him feel worse by saying that he was better, but naturally couldn't make him better by saying that he was worse. Absence, this December, from the *Peter Pan* rehearsals, at the Garrick Theatre, where two changes were being made. The restoration, after its long absence, of the Lagoon scene; and the introduction for the first time of lost boys who were also boys off the stage. A theoretical rather than a practical improvement, which marked at the same time the regretted end of Miss Chase's, and her successors', pillow-and-pyjama dance. This also, by the way, was the season when Miss Eva Le Gallienne began playing Peter at her Civic Repertory Theatre in New York,

which considering its financial resources still rather makes one gasp.

Arrival of Mrs. Hardy, who remained in the flat—and in an almost visible state of prospective mourning which scarcely relieved the patient's gloom. Cynthia doing her devoted best, and hoping to the last that he could get down to Stanway for Christmas. But he couldn't. He was still obviously too ill. Her own Christmas and New Year were spent, as far as possible, in two places at once, while Elizabeth Lucas stood by and helped in London. And thus they all found themselves slipping into 1929.

Barrie was well enough by the beginning of January to celebrate Nicholas's promotion to a partnership in the City by inviting all the partners to dinner; and even well enough to be once more the life and soul of the evening. But meanwhile Sir Douglas Shields—who was now building another hospital there—had urged and finally persuaded him to come out to Cannes. At the last moment there was certainly some question as to whether he wouldn't have preferred a relapse. But on January 12th he set off, with Frank Thurston, on the Blue Train; arrived at the more than internationally-named Californie Palace Hotel on the following morning; and was out walking, with Sir Douglas, before lunch. "It is rather awful," he writes next day, "to think that I have only been here one night yet. . . . Sir Douglas is very kind. . . . The only lady I have spoken to tells me her mother never comes here nowadays because she found she always got bronchitis at Cannes!"

That remains the general tone of the reports. He acknowledges the existence of the sunshine and scenery, and the comfort of the hotel, but for all Sir Douglas's care and kindness he wants to get back. Though he knows also that it is all doing him good, this is eminently another occasion which can't be enjoyed until it's safely over: and will then, no doubt, seem more and more enjoyable, the further it recedes into the past. Meanwhile he has booked his berth for the return journey; encouraged by this he makes one expedition—with Sir Douglas and Thurston—to Monte Carlo; and then, just thirteen days after he left it, he is tearing home. When Cynthia dines with him on the night of his arrival, she finds him in high spirits and at the top of his form. One wonders what Sir Douglas put in his case-book. It was certainly a curiously complicated and simple cure.

Third West End revival of *Quality Street*, at the Haymarket—

where Horace Watson had now succeeded to Frederick Harrison's throne—on February 14th, with Miss Angela Baddeley and Francis Lister in the two leading parts; with Miss Jean Cadell as Miss Susan Throssel; and the one and only Miss Hilda Trevelyan in the small but in this case immediately outstanding part of Patty, the maid. But only, the public rather than the Press seem to have decided, a comparatively trifling run.

A couple of nights later he gave a dinner-party at the flat—the Asquiths, Lady Horner, Gilmour, and others—and took them on to a private showing of a talking-film called *The Doctor's Secret*. An American version, in other words, of *Half an Hour*—with Miss Ruth Chatterton and H. B. Wainer—which would be shown at the Plaza Cinema in another month. This was one of the very earliest talkies to reach London, if not the first without music, and could hardly be regarded as more than a curiosity then, or as an affront to the ear-drums now. For some reason, also, when the voices became intelligible, the photography seemed to become blurred. In fact, it wasn't really much of an entertainment. But it is mentioned for historical reasons, and to show that Barrie was in at the beginning of this evolution, too.

Cynthia's notes still speak of good spirits, on the whole, in March, and of more than one evening when they rose to the old, infectious heights. On April 13th he went down for a week-end at Stanway again, and it was on the same day that the Press announced the most spectacular of all his gifts. What had happened was that in March he had been revising and thinking about his will, and had had the notion of leaving the rights in *Peter Pan*—which were still worth at least £2,000 a year—to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. And that, by any ordinary standards, would have been quite generous enough. Then, however, he had spoken of this project to its Chairman—Hugh Macmillan, K.C., who would become Lord Macmillan next year—and almost at the same moment had yielded to a still more munificent impulse. He would hand over the rights at once.

Can you imagine a hospital keeping quiet about this, or any newspaper deciding that it wasn't news? Of course not; yet of course the benefactor must react in his own way, too. He hadn't exactly meant it to be a secret, but he hadn't wanted the publicity, either. If it's still rather hard to say what he did mean or want, the fact remains that he was now filled not so much with regret as with

some profound, indescribable form of disappointment and annoyance. Perhaps he had expected to feel some special glow—like a child giving away its best toy—and was just as simply surprised by the flatness that actually followed. And of course there were some real drawbacks as well. For one thing every charitable institution redoubled its efforts to extract money from him. It was natural, though naturally irritating, that one of the earliest appeals should come from the Great Ormond Street Hospital itself. And then there would be complications on the theatrical side. A hospital couldn't suddenly go into management—and didn't in this case, for when Gilbert Miller withdrew from the responsibility, the Daniel Mayer Company took over instead; but when a hospital is relying on a play for part of its income, of course it wants every pound and penny that it can get.

It might thus favour cheese-paring. It might realise that the London pantomime season was getting shorter, but that while it lasted, the bigger the theatre, the more one could take. Perfectly justifiable, no doubt, when one thinks of the sick children; but less so, surely, when one thinks of this particular play. For the sake of charity it moved—after one more Christmas at the St. James's—to the vast Palladium, which wasn't even a legitimate theatre at all. It was a variety house—in which millions have enjoyed themselves enormously, and to which variety undoubtedly owes its survival and revival in the face of the triumphant film. But in size and atmosphere it is about as different from the Duke of York's as two places of entertainment can very well be; and to say that *Peter Pan* could ever be the same there is as impossible as it would be absolutely untrue.

The children would still be brought in their thousands, the magic would still hold them, or a certain number would still scream and ask to be taken out. The Great Ormond Street Hospital would continue—until chaos came again—to make its Christmas hay while the pantomime season shone. The other rights and royalties would still add to the harvest. But for those who remembered—and of course the author was one of them—there was a new poignancy in this large-scale *Peter Pan*. For a reason, of course. For the extraordinary reason that hospitals in this country are always in debt and must always go begging. Barrie had given more than money, but the public had given something, too. Farewell, after this next Christmas, to *Peter Pan* as its own generation knew it. It was earning

much-needed funds for sick children now, and would go on earning them in more ways than one. But the queer and sad thing is that it only really became commercialised after the author had given it away.

Another speech on April 23rd. Sixty-sixth annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, at the May Fair Hotel, with Major Astor, of *The Times*, in the Chair, and the Prime Minister and Mrs. Baldwin as the principal guests. The Prime Minister would accordingly propose the toast of Journalism, and Sir James Barrie would respond. A clear opening for autobiography and reminiscence, for of course the key-word had roused more memories from the past. Journalism meant Greenwood and Grenville Street. The company were taken back into the eighties, as Barrie stood there thinking of them both. Much in this speech for anyone with our clues, and plenty that was quite fascinating enough without them. But for some reason he wouldn't raise his voice, and he wouldn't take his pipe out of his mouth, so that for once it would all seem rather better in print. Anything but an off night, so far as the text went; but sometimes he almost seemed to be speaking from the eighties, too.

An auction afterwards. Manuscript of *The Twelve-Pound Look*—presented by the author—knocked down to Gabriel Wells, the American dealer, for 2,300 guineas. No, hardly a bargain; yet the buyer certainly knew his business. Besides, this was still six months before the stock-market crash.

Nevertheless, two thousand three hundred guineas. Had even Barrie in Grenville Street ever dreamt of that?

Reaction, of course. Pains, sleeplessness, and another cold. But out again, presently, for more rehearsals. The play that had followed *Quality Street* at the Haymarket had been a failure, and Watson had fallen back on *Mary Rose*, though this time with none of the original cast. So the author spent his sixty-ninth birthday in the shrouded stalls, and would sooner, perhaps, that it had been a new play or the old company, but smoked and emitted laconic advice as before. This second revival opened two nights later, on May 11th, and—like *Quality Street*—ran for weeks rather than months. Tricky things, revivals. And the Haymarket a little out of luck this year. A case for philosophy and detachment, and no outward symptoms of anything else.

Another general election at the end of May, resulting in the return of a Labour Government under Ramsay MacDonald, though it must still rely on Liberal support for a majority. The incoming and outgoing Prime Ministers were both Barrie's friends, but it was for the latter that he had used his two votes. Whether he had become a Conservative, or whether this was now the only thing that an old-fashioned Liberal could be, is a political problem that needn't necessarily be solved. He was going no further towards the left, though. He hadn't cut himself off from Downing Street, but Baldwin was his leader from now on. That's to say at any moment when he had to choose.

In June his brother-in-law, William Winter, fell and broke his leg. Barrie had him moved into Shields's nursing-home, visited him there constantly, and was far more anxious than either the patient or his wife. On the other hand, it was no innovation that he should take over her duties and carry them out with enough care and kindness for two. All this had been going on, in the background, for at least forty years.

On June 25th Dion Boucicault died at his house at Hurley, shortly after returning from his last South African tour, at the age of just over seventy. This was indeed the close of a chapter, though in its final pages Barrie had played only a minor and distant part. Yet it wasn't merely for Miss Vanbrugh's sake that he attended the funeral. His affection here would never falter, and it would have been quite incomprehensible if it had. But though he had parted almost entirely, in professional matters, from her husband, he knew well enough what he owed him. Mightn't say so, perhaps. Yet there he was by the graveside, with his silent memories. He couldn't have been anywhere else.

In the middle of July his sister, and the hired piano, came to stay again, and his brother-in-law was at last beginning to mend. The visit was a mixture, as always on his own side, of hospitality and strain, but the latter quality was considerably strengthened by the approach of another important speech. No shortage of material, for the occasion was to be the presentation of the Freedom of Edinburgh, and he had enough local reminiscences to have spoken for days on end. But it was an ordeal. It would be far more formal than at Dumfries or Jedburgh, and he was very nervous as the time drew near.

One might say that he needn't have been, for nothing but

enthusiasm was awaiting him in the Usher Hall on July 29th. But there was another new Freeman to be admitted first, and Barrie must curb his pale restlessness until this part of the proceedings was through. Then he stood up, and took the enchanted audience back to his student days. There was glamour in them now. The more he spoke of his early struggles and disappointments, the more the obvious ending of the story heightened every word. Not that he mentioned it, for most certainly there was no need to do that. And not that he was the least formal now, or had ever meant to be, however much the supposed necessity had haunted him in advance. Once more the apostle of shyness spoke entirely about himself. Perhaps it was expected; even though no one had seen the notebook which was now at last beginning to speculate as to whether the store of memories—to which every demand for a speech had added—couldn't somehow be turned into a book. Yes, that's how *The Greenwood Hat* really started, for the subject of speech after speech had been J. M. Barrie, and no one knew better what a fascinating subject it was. In each period of preparation now he was considering how he could approach it—as if that were possible—from without. There was an idea for writing a series of criticisms of his own works. There was an idea, which was adopted, for omitting his name. There was a still better idea—combining self-expression with secrecy—of issuing it only to a small circle of friends.

All this was in the smoke-clouds still, and meanwhile he could still, apparently, tell an audience what they mustn't be allowed to read. So he told them a great deal—though it wasn't all absolutely true—and they laughed and glowed even at this gathering of dignitaries in Edinburgh, and knew well enough that no Freeman would ever make a speech like this again. In other words, it was another triumph, with all the concomitant columns in the Press, and Barrie returned to London next day happy though exhausted, tired but free for once from the blacker reaction; having also made an impression on civic Edinburgh which would do much to strengthen a thought in the minds of a growing number of its graduates. For Lord Balfour, the present Chancellor, was over eighty now, and known to be feeling the burden of his years.

Stanway again. The ninth successive August, with the Asquiths, as usual, here all the time, and visits from other guests. Augustine



Birrell. Mrs. Hardy. Conan Doyle. He's seventy now, this former collaborator—though Birrell is nearly ten years older—and has travelled far since the days of *Jane Annie*. Far and wide, so that meetings for a long time have been far and few. But here he is, still with his enthusiasms and still with a short cut to Barrie's heart. The last journey of all in less than a year now; but there is no need to wish him courage, for he has always had that. Farewell to another unforgotten figure in the story.

And Stephen Gwynn was there, who had "drifted rather into book-writing," as he says in *Who's Who*, and had a real love and understanding of his host. And Lady Gwendeline Churchill, with a daughter and son. And the Eccils. And Elizabeth and Audrey Lucas. And Jack and Gerrie. And Peter; a full-fledged publisher now.

The games still going on, especially the golf-croquet and the shuffleboard. But Barrie doesn't try tennis now, he slips in and out of the children's cricket, and the longer walks have become very rare. A quieter August with a smaller house-party, and some happy days at the end when all but the Asquiths had gone. These summers seem to mark the end and beginning of the year now, much more than the Christmases, but they also seem to return a little sooner each time. A pause, or the passing illusion of a pause, in the golden house and the golden Gloucestershire sunshine; and then the clock starts ticking, just a little faster again.

He was back in London at the beginning of September, for the dress rehearsal of this year's fourth revival; for in August Loraine had put on his Savoy bill of two years ago—*Barbara's Wedding* and *Strindberg*—for another short run at the Apollo. Now it was *Dear Brutus* again, still with Gerald du Maurier and still with Norman Forbes, but very little else that was the same. The Wyndham's days and the partnership with Frank Curzon were over. Gerald had moved to the St. James's, where a tremendous and then a less tremendous success had been followed by a comparative disappointment, and now he had suddenly taken the Playhouse from Miss Gladys Cooper, and was staging this revival with the notion of playing for safety. Circumstances, never his own temperament, had brought the decision, and the result was almost immediate boredom with the whole thing. He wished now that he had taken a bigger risk. The old lines merely reminded him of the happier times nine and twelve years ago. The feeling penetrated the company whether

they knew it or not, and the play *dragged* rather than ran, in its new home under Charing Cross Station, for about fourteen weeks. Not a technical failure, for it scored its century, but something sad about it, and almost shoddy. Indeed, the four revivals this year had all been disappointing, and some of the restless West End public were beginning to say that Barrie was out-of-date. Times were changing, as he sat there in his fastness, writing the speeches and pondering over that notion for another book. He knew this; he knew which times he had preferred; yet knew also, rightly or wrongly, that with a fresh stimulus he could come back into the theatre as triumphantly and irresistibly as before. But there wasn't one; and still it was his mood, nearly always, that it didn't really matter. Only one in a thousand must be allowed to see or guess that he cared.

Two tasks this September, with Mrs. Winter again in the flat, and William at last able to go back with her when she left. A foreword to Mme. Karsavina's *Theatre Street*, the story of her initiation into the Imperial Russian Ballet. And another speech. Opening, by Sir James Barrie, on September 25th, of the Glasgow Corporation's Annual Housing and Health Exhibition at the Kelvin Hall. More reminiscences, this time naturally of his Glasgow days, and some suitable flattery for his hosts. But though they gave him a case of pipes and did everything to flatter him in return, he had been anxious beforehand and came back tired and depressed. Then something brought on a chill. He was up again a few days later, attending rehearsals of *Half an Hour*—yet another revival—at the Coliseum. But he wasn't well, and the latest symptom was a series of sudden attacks of giddiness. They came without warning, and passed as swiftly as they came. But they were alarming, because the doctor seemed unable to account for them, and made the rest of this year a rather distressing time.

Scribner's new limited and complete edition—'The Pen Edition, it was called—was issued, in fourteen volumes, towards the end of October. But a week later America was very much taken up with something else. The big and disastrous slump that followed an extraordinary era of speculation, that ruined hundreds of thousands, and brought very serious losses to Barrie as well. For years now his investments had all been in Gilmour's hands, and he had himself only the vaguest idea of where his capital had been spread. Once or twice, to his surprise, he had even found that he was overdrawn, and he had known of smaller losses—almost inevitable under this

system—but that there was still something like a quarter of a million standing somewhere or other in his name. The crash this autumn brought this much nearer a hundred and fifty thousand, which was still, as he was well aware, some way from ruin. Yet one can be careless or casual about money matters, and still feel that one's earnings should be safer than this. One can hate one's riches—as he did often enough—and still feel that they shouldn't diminish without some more obvious cause.

He was still solvent and still generous, and still only shouted at Gilmour when they were tackling his income-tax together; but one can't say that he wasn't a good deal annoyed. Well, naturally. It had been Easy Come for so long that there was something personally offensive—though the actual criminals were most maddeningly elusive—in the change to Easy Go.

In November a company of Scotch players—under the auspices of the Scottish National Theatre Society, of which Barrie had become an honorary vice-president at its foundation early last year—appeared at the Lyric Theatre in *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, and gave something of a lesson in acting to the West End. Thus, in a sense, there was a fifth London revival in 1929, and preparations for the sixth were already under way. *Peter Pan*, of course, with Gerald du Maurier back in his old double part, twenty-five years since the beginning. But, alas, even Gerald was twenty-five years older. He and Miss Forbes-Robertson and the rest of them acted some of the scenes, a few days before the real opening, on an improvised stage in a ward of the Great Ormond Street Hospital. "Few people realised," said the Press next day, "that Sir James Barrie was present." But he was, though for some reason this was another black week of depression. Then, luckily, came the other kind of reaction. The pen and the desk had something to do with it. He had found a plan and a solution for those written reminiscences at last. *The Greenwood Hat* was on the very verge of coming to his aid. First, however, he went down with the Asquiths to Lord and Lady Plymouth's—Lady Plymouth being his secretary's youngest sister—for a Christmas gathering at their house in Worcestershire. On Christmas Day itself he starred in one of his own charades. The general opinion was that his performance was just about as brilliant and funny as anything could very well be.

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1930. No, it isn't a real break in the continuity, yet if there are moments at which we realise that subtler changes are creeping into the story, the beginning of this year is one of them.

Barrie will be seventy in May. The recurrent and cumulative record of ill-health is certainly a matter of more than the old kind of delicacy now. But though it is physical, it is psychological as well. Sometimes he bends before an attack from a fresh quarter and appears almost deliberately to lose ground. Sometimes he stands firm, fights, and appears to win; but only at the cost of less resistance next time. It seems impossible to call him an invalid in many of the intervening phases; as impossible as to trace the graph of health and spirits, which may rise and fall together, and then suddenly have no apparent connection at all. It's the courage and the extraordinary complexity that beat us. Yet Barrie in his seventieth year is living on an impetus that is clearly and tragically no longer inexhaustible. If he weren't Barrie, we should unquestionably have to think of him as an invalid now. But then Barrie, no less unquestionably, is just what he still is.

The cough hardly ever seems to leave him. The dark and distant moods are never further than just round the corner. He can't sleep. There are pouches under his eyes. He courts solitude, and then finds himself lonely. He sets out on the walks that used to be so long, yet were all part of the preparation for the next day's work, and then suddenly the point seems to have gone from them. He's tired. He may get into a taxi, or he may drop into a cinema—when it is a toss-up whether he will come out again at once or discover a bit of construction or acting that for the moment makes him forget his fatigue. But if that happens, it's still waiting for him. And so are the memories that never leave him alone.

Cynthia can't always be there when she is wanted, for there is her own life and often enough her own ill-health; and can't always help—who could?—when she is here. E. V. Lucas is still turning up pretty regularly, and is a true friend, yet with moods by now of his own. There's Freyberg—a rock, but it isn't always the right day for a rock. Granville-Barker, very close sometimes, yet again there are barriers for him. Peter comes in to lunch from his office, and

nothing could break this link; but even he may come up against the wall of silence. Nico is luckier or more adept here; but then of course his own home must now come first. Elizabeth Lucas—what doesn't she know and understand, and how often has she had to go away as baffled as the rest?

That isn't the whole list—far from it—and still there are week-end visits, particularly and soon almost entirely to Stanway and Mells. The hermit has taken no final vows. But often he is so far inside his cave that only a shadow appears. Or a deputy, it seems, as Barrie himself lurks in that distant retreat. What is he doing there? One knows he isn't happy, but nobody can reach him until he chooses to come out. So easy to jar, for which the punishment—though it may be only one glance—instantly paralyses all faculties. So difficult, and so impertinent, to try and comfort or soothe.

It's intolerable that anyone should treat one like this. It's unbearable to have to feel so much pity. But no one can possibly mention either kind of suffering. That's something, as we all know, that just can't be done.

Nor, of course, is it always like this. Such glorious returns of the old and utterly irresistible magic. But they're not coming any oftener, nor lasting any longer; and someone, as well as Barrie, will always have to pay for them. We know that, by this time, too.

Yet in January, 1930—which was the month when something called The Peter Pan League was launched by the Great Ormond Street Hospital, as a further method of sentimentalising the cold-blooded business side of charity; in this month, and in his flat with the big desk and the wide views over the river, Barrie was working again. In his own way he was writing his autobiography; even though, in his own way, he had never done anything else. The period that he had chosen, and that fascinated him as he looked back, was to cover the first years in London; the years of the tremendous output and industry as an anonymous free-lance. The most romantic literary years of his life. No one could see the romance more clearly, or the contrast between Grenville Street and the room where he was now writing. It was the best kind of story about any author—the early struggles, the sky-rocket fizzing with its own energy before it soars into the heights—but of course it was best of all when the hero was J. M. B. Those speeches had brought it more and more into his mind. For over a year now he had been able to turn to the pages of Herbert Garland's *Bibliography*, with its long

lists of the titles of old articles, and to recall the inner history of one after another. The next insistent impulse had been to re-read the articles themselves.

Some—whether actually in a hat-box or not—were still stored away in the flat. Others, and no one will ever know how many, had inevitably been overlooked even by Herbert Garland. But the *Bibliography* and the resources of the British Museum could be employed to produce photostat copies of everything else. Queer-looking sheets, with the appearance of black paper and white ink. Great parcels arrived in the Adelphi, and the author pored lingeringly and lovingly over what he had written forty or forty-five years ago. Some he had forgotten altogether; of some he could remember almost every word. Some filled him with a kind of paternal or indeed, by this time, almost grandfatherly pride. Others, naturally, would seem rather lucky now to have got past Greenwood or the other editors at all. But he was still fascinated by this dip into the far-off eighties. He read and read, and thought again what an extraordinary and golden age it had all been.

The book, he had now decided, should consist of a series of these articles with a series of explanatory chapters in between. He sorted and selected. He took up his pen and set eagerly to work. But of course it did something more than write and re-write those artful passages of guarded revelation. It couldn't possibly leave the text of the old articles alone. It altered them, it improved them, it went on polishing where—forty or forty-five years ago—the urgency had compelled it to break off. So that the articles in *The Greenwood Hat* would in the end be written partly by an anonymous journalist in his twenties and partly by Sir James Barrie, Bart., O.M. Put forward as documentary evidence, they would actually be something rather different. But he couldn't help this, any more than he could keep touches of exaggeration and even fiction out of the story which would accompany them from the Apology to the Envoi.

All this labour, however, which kept him busy, and happy too, through so much of 1930, was never intended for a real publisher or the ordinary public. There were rumours, and there were high hopes, but Barrie would pay no attention to either. When his book was finished, it was to be printed, in one extremely limited edition, and distributed among his own carefully-chosen friends. It was to be a secret autobiography. No copy must ever be on sale. Thus he could at the same time tell his story and remain completely

apart from all other authors who had done or were doing the same kind of thing. He could combine his own special form of egotism with a clear sign of his contempt for people who wrote about themselves. Very ingenious. A triumph in the art of eating one's cake and still having it. Of course he was throwing away the easy opportunity of making several thousand pounds. But that was part of the point. Even if it were also part of the point that he didn't want them or need them.

Yet above all it was the discovery of a real occupation that was doing so much for him now. Health and spirits both improved, though he was incapable of working except under high pressure. He hurried along, though he was also incessantly altering and amending, as if an editor were once more waiting and there weren't a moment to be lost. Whether because so much of him was now back in the eighties or because, for the first time in years, he was wrapped up in an absorbing task, he seemed far younger this spring. And he had a secret. That always helped him. Moreover, it would still be a secret even when he had reached the end.

Then came another call from outside. The Royal Literary Fund, at whose annual dinner he had presided twenty-six years ago, invited and pressed him to take the Chair again on his seventieth birthday. An interruption; but it was difficult—in fact, it was impossible—to refuse. Double work now. An additional effort in another medium at the same time. Not to be taken lightly, though, however light, on its surface, the ultimate speech might be. He wouldn't only be facing the authors who had succeeded, but—which for him was quite genuinely more important—would be helping those who had failed. For at these banquets they had cheque-forms on the tables—the Chairman's own contribution would be two hundred and fifty pounds—and the speech of the evening had another purpose as well as to entertain. So for a while he would be busier than ever at his big desk.

On March 4th Charles Whibley, who was exactly five months older than Barrie, and had suffered from a good deal of painful illness in recent years, died in the South of France. The second period of friendship had been close and highly-valued, and its ending was bound to be another blow. The body was brought home to England, and Barrie insisted on the young widow staying with him until after the funeral. He would. One can hardly imagine him doing anything else. Yet of course this was a further responsibility,

and a heavy one. There were certain signs of fatigue again.

On March 19th Lord Balfour died. No immediate intimation—for naturally there is decency in these things—from the graduates of Edinburgh, and when it came it wouldn't be an unanimous request, but a suggestion to a possible candidate. It was coming, though. And Barrie was going to accept it. A very high honour, whatever the opposition and whatever the result of the polling. For nothing less could he possibly have re-entered this kind of public competition now, and his agony and anxiety could well be measured by his extraordinary composure and calm. But he wanted it. He didn't doubt that if the choice fell on himself, it would be the right one. For he could always see himself in a position of supreme authority. He knew all about his own resources of dignity, and strategy, and tact.

At the end of March he took his work down to Brighton for a fortnight—to his favourite Royal Albion Hotel—and was joined for the last part of the visit by the Asquith family. He was out of London, therefore for the first public showing of another Barrie film—still announced as “all-talking”—based on *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, with Miss Beryl Mercer and Gary Cooper in the two leading parts. *Medals*, it was called, and this time Hollywood hadn't necessarily changed a title for the worse.

Easter, which fell late this year, he spent, still working hard, at Stanway. On April 30th the 1930 Australian Test Team, under the captaincy of W. M. Woodfull, opened their season with a county match in which the great Bradman made two hundred and thirty-six runs. And on the same day Barrie saluted them by means of a long and more than expert letter in the columns of *The Times*. As they went on to play thirty-four matches in this glorious year, and only lost one, the tribute was certainly deserved. And presently, of course, he would be meeting them, and watching them, and discovering everything about the other new arrivals, and paying further tributes before they all went back.

Now it was May, though, and in another moment it would be the important Ninth. It's here. Sir James Barrie is seventy years old to-day. The Press are well aware of this, and their birthday greeting takes the forms of special articles on every side. Glowing, proud, and often—though this is far from being the writers' fault—distinctly inaccurate. Again, if some of them seem prouder at this moment of his age than of his achievements, they are merely reflect-



ing what the public feels; a very special affection for one whom they have known, and who has avoided them, so long. This isn't the day on which to analyse his literary or dramatic record. They go almost straight to the essential part of the story. That he was born in a cottage, that he has ascended to the top of the tree, and that now it is his seventieth birthday, and he is still here to be congratulated and praised.

There can be no doubt that this same, simple, and satisfactory emotion is also present, and in a pronounced form, among the distinguished guests who are now assembling at the Hotel Victoria for the purpose of dining, of listening to their Chairman, and of contributing to the Royal Literary Fund. As they swarm in the big ante-chamber, they are all on the look-out for this one, legendary character; but it is only as they came crowding into the banqueting-hall that they catch sight of him at last. In the centre of the long, main table. With the badge of the Order of Merit suspended round his neck. Very small. Looking, of course, just faintly disgusted. But fully capable—there can be no doubt—of handling this assemblage in his own special way. The legend certainly becomes no less romantic for those who can now see him with their own eyes.

And so, as the tide of waiters recedes, he goes through the ritual of the royal and loyal toasts—which means the immediate appearance in his mouth of a large cigar—and then rises again to propose Prosperity to the Royal Literary Fund. More reminiscences and revelations, in the guise of a very Old Hand. A reference to Grenville Street; so much in his mind now, though he won't give its name. A cunning half-turn towards the subject of charity, and then the direct and irresistible appeal which sends the indelible pencils—also thoughtfully provided by the organisers—scurrying over the cheque-forms. With all possible respect to Messrs. Duff Cooper and J. B. Priestley, who propose and reply to the toast of Literature, it is still the echo of the first speaker's tones that lingers in the listeners' ears. He has told them little enough, really, but he has made them both happier and sadder than somehow they had expected. They're still thinking of his birthday, and of the astonishing story of his life. They haven't forgotten his successes, but they still want to help him—even though they have just signed a cheque for rather more than they expected, either—and they still don't know how it can be done.

However, they cheer and pound the tables again when Lord Crawford, as President, rises to voice their thanks. And then Barrie thanks them in return. And subsides, and has again somehow vanished, to a further echo of affectionate and vociferous applause. Yes, just twenty-six years, to the very hour, since he left the Chair at another of these anniversary dinners, and drove back to Leinster Corner; in the spring before the first performance of *Peter Pan*. He has less far to go to-night. His secret eyrie is only a few hundred yards away. And so he turns towards it, at the end of his seventieth birthday. Back to the lonely flat.

Already it had been announced that the General Council of Edinburgh University had recommended the election of the Marquess of Linlithgow to the vacant chancellorship. That Sir James Barrie had been nominated by another body of graduates who wanted an old Edinburgh man. And that a sub-section of the latter category had invited Lord Macmillan to stand. With these candidates the decision must be reached, at the end of this month, by the rather mysterious and intricate method of the alternative vote. There would also be personal voting following by postal voting, so that the final choice would develop by visible and possibly misleading stages. More interesting, no doubt, for the onlookers, but distinctly harassing for the protagonists.

Meanwhile, with regard to at least one of them, there were other announcements, too. That Sir James Barrie had been offered the Freedom of Kirriemuir—no need for us to add that this was the Freedom that now meant more than all; that the ceremony would be combined with the opening of the new cricket pavilion that he had given to his native town; that the first teams to emerge from it would be the West of Scotland Club and the Allahakbarries; and that the latter—though of course the name was only being lent for the occasion, for the real Allahakbarries had long since played their last match—would include the Australian heroes, Messrs. Macartney and Mailey, now both in attendance, when not thus engaged, on the main body which they had once adorned. Barrie, in other words, was to have a scroll in a casket—and wanted it, at the moment, as much as anything on earth—and Kirriemuir was to have more than its reward. Some rather masterly stage-management in all this. Yet with the gift for it, and a heart warmed by nothing but the most innocent satisfaction, why on earth not?

Another announcement. The Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, whose Worcestershire origin hasn't impeded his past appointment as Lord Rector of two Scottish universities and Chancellor of a third, has this year become Chancellor of his own university, Cambridge, and will celebrate his inauguration by the bestowal of seventeen honorary LL.Ds. Barrie—also John Galsworthy, and Sir James Irvine of St. Andrews—are to be among them. They will appear, and walk in a procession, and receive their additional initials, on June 5th.

But there is yet another announcement to come first. May 30th. Result of the Edinburgh University election. Never mind about the preliminary stages, in which Lord Macmillan has been, as they say, eliminated, and Lord Linlithgow has somehow passed from second to first place. It's the postal poll that matters, and in that Barrie sweeps in with a majority of nearly two thousand. So that he will be a prospective Chancellor himself when he goes up to Cambridge—one mustn't call him more until the actual installation—and a very proud and happy man. Well done, Edinburgh, for there is mutual honour in this choice. Who would have thought it, when that photograph was taken, in the hired cap and gown, forty-eight years ago? But romantic enough to think of it now; and the office will be well and truly held. For though the new Chancellor has gone a long way since then, he is still, in his heart, a student. The robes won't change him. And the new students will always have someone who is at least secretly on their side.

So then came the ceremony at Cambridge; and on the next day he set off for a series of ceremonies at Kirriemuir. A luncheon of honour. The presentation, before a large gathering, of the Freedom; followed, of course, by a very special speech. Then a move, in the form of a triumphal procession, to the new cricket pavilion—which by a happy thought of the donor wasn't only a pavilion but a camera obscura as well—and a second speech, to a still larger gathering, about himself, and Kirriemuir, and James Robb. And then, at last the beginning of the cricket. Barrie's name appeared in the list of Allahakbarries as twelfth man, but his only personal share in the match consisted in losing the toss. Then the five thousand spectators settled down, on the boundaries of that most beautifully situated of all grounds, to watch the West of Scotland batting manfully against Macartney and Mailey. And presently Barrie extracted himself from a mob of Kirriemarian friends and acquaintances, and wandered

away; for there were some whom he must now visit who were too old, even in June, to climb to the top of their Hill.

A very great day indeed. A tremendous exposition of the generosity and kindness, of the love of sentiment, and of the frank realisation that Kirriemuir was his own town now, by right of conquest as well as of birth, to do with as he chose. No hiding from his own people, for if they had idealised him, he had now idealised them, too. He had left them; he had almost adopted another nationality; during all the fullest part of the story he had been a Londoner by preference, and had hardly for a moment wished to be anything else. Nor is this only an objective statement, for he had said so himself, again and again. No distant thought now, either, of abandoning the Adelphi for the scenes of his boyhood, for all the new love that had been born.

But the scenes were coming closer, the love was growing stronger, now that he was in his seventy-first year. There was mutual flattery, if you like, but there was a deeper feeling on his own side as well. A complete life is a kind of circle; there is a second childhood for the emotions which has nothing to do with any kind of mental decay. As the burden becomes heavier, so we turn more and more to the place and time where, as it must now seem, there were no burdens at all. There lies a paradise that we have known and lost, not one that may or may not have been promised, and may or may not be reached. We can't go back to it, yet still it calls to us; and though the time has gone for ever, the place may still, for some of us, be there. Barrie had only left his boyhood, so far as he ever left it at all, on an elastic cord. If it were less resilient than it had once been, the ends of no cord had ever been more firmly attached. As it pulled, he was also gathering it into loops now; and though the years had frayed it, it was still—if not more than ever—the one clue to the labyrinth of life. Yes, Kirriemuir was calling. He would have to return again. And presently, though only after peace had come to him at last, he would return to it for good.

*The Greenwood Hat* still kept him busy, if not quite so busy, in London, and there were dark hints now for some who might eventually have a copy of their own. They were tempted to ask if he were writing his memoirs, and received ambiguous or evasive replies. But whatever they guessed or imagined, they knew one thing; that he was enjoying another mystery as lingeringly as he

could. Meanwhile, the Winters came to stay with him; and the Asquiths went abroad; and returned, in July, to find the same, quiet ritual of work, social engagements, and occasional week-ends, still going on. All leading, once more, towards August and Stanway, with a long and familiar list of guests again, and in the midst of it the particularly welcome appearance of Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Macartney. But no visit from the Test team this year, for this year there was no Cheltenham match.

However, Barrie hadn't lost sight of them as they pursued, subject to the weather, their victorious career. And at a farewell banquet on September 8th, given by the President of the M.C.C., he proposed the health of the Australian Team, with one or more special jokes for nearly every member. The jokes showed well enough that even when he hadn't been watching them in person, he had been paying the closest possible attention to the sporting Press. A great evening of cricketers, with such heroes as Lord Harris, and one still known in these circles as Ranji, to represent the old guard; and the incomparable Bradman—with an average by now of 139.14 in the five Test Matches—and the even younger McCabe, to show how the tradition was still being carried on. Barrie in the established yet indescribable position that he had made for himself. As the spirit of cricket, perhaps. Certainly as an indispensable attendant at any such occasion, where the big names in the great game were gathered for the exchange of compliments and chaff.

Then the Australians would play their last, habitual match against Mr. H. D. G. Leveson-Gower's XI—always a sign that autumn was approaching—and so would vanish from the green grounds of England for another three seasons. But Barrie would still be closely conning each average and record, would be sending messages from time to time, and would be ready with the same admiring and affectionate welcome as soon as they or their successors returned.

Now, however, Edinburgh was on the horizon again. His public installation as Chancellor was to take place towards the end of October, and would involve another very carefully-prepared speech. He was working on it already, with a good deal of inward strain; for this was the biggest ordeal of all, in view not only of the heavy official responsibility, but of the fact that he was following Lord Balfour, who had been Chancellor for forty years. Again, also, as at St. Andrews, it was his prerogative to nominate the recipients

of a number of honorary LL.Ds., and in the end he had chosen five. Sir Thomas Holland, the Principal of the University. Harley Granville-Barker. Neil Munro, an old friend and literary colleague. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. And Sir Joseph Thomson, master of Trinity College, Cambridge. All distinguished, all well-known to the new Chancellor, and all pleased and proud to be present at the ceremony in the McEwan Hall on the morning of Saturday, October 25th.

Barrie and his secretary had gone up to Scotland three days in advance, and stayed with Lady Wemyss at her little house on the Kilspindie links. Two full days, therefore, of final nervous tension, and then they all drove into Edinburgh and the hour had come. Appearance, with immense acclamation, of Barrie as his own, pale, anxious self. Sudden transformation, by the means of glorious robes, into a figure of impressive authority and power. Then the conferring of the honorary and other degrees. And then the inaugural address. No jokes this time, and only the most formal reminiscences. For the speaker knows when to be dignified, and he is treating of education now, of its demands and its opportunities, very much in the tone of the author of *Courage*. Yes, it's a fine speech, an orator's speech, and a Scotch speech for Scotchmen. The speech of a real Chancellor, too. For he has practised this part so carefully, and has felt it so deeply, that he has now almost forgotten that he is acting at all. Only the superlative achievement must yet show that it is another work of art.

The loud-speakers break down, as in 1930 is still their playful habit, but he isn't put off by that. He still holds his big audience, he still delivers the measured periods, and builds them up towards the planned climax. It's here. "Would you care to know my guess at what is an entrancing life? Carlyle said that genius was an infinite capacity for taking pains. I don't know about genius," says the Chancellor, with a faint air of defiance; "but the entrancing life, I think, must be an infinite love of taking pains. You try it."

That is the message, and he has the right to give it; even though, as we turn to *Frederick the Great*, we see that what Carlyle really wrote was that genius means "transcendent capacity of taking trouble," and that Barrie himself hasn't taken the trouble to avoid a misquotation. But that isn't the point. His key-word was "love," and love, in his own case, it has always been. The audience, which now bursts into thunders of applause, has no idea of the weeks and months of labour that its playwright-Chancellor has put into this

inaugural address. No notion of the passion for exhausting revision which has gone into his very lightest plays. Perhaps they still think him whimsical. Or perhaps that he was just preaching a little in his new robes. Yet though advice can always be taken or left, he was telling them the truth just now. He has only known one constant form of happiness. He didn't learn it here in Edinburgh. It wasn't happiness when he wrote of it in his old diary as "Grind, grind, grind." But then it came to him—the same words with an utterly different meaning—and that was how he turned into the astonishing J.M.B.

"You try it," he tells the undergraduates, as he offers them his own Blue Bird. If one of them can catch it, perhaps he will be a Chancellor too, some day. But it isn't so easily caught as all that, and he still hasn't told them why he looks so sad. For still there are a hundred lonely and mysterious Barriers lurking under those glittering, glorious robes.

Then he took them off again, lunched as the guest of the Students' Union, spoke again—lightly, gaily, and with a sudden but only half-humorous boast of all the prime ministers whom he had known; retired; reappeared for an enormous evening reception; withdrew to Kilspindie; returned on Sunday morning to read the lesson in St. Giles's; spent one more night at Lady Wemyss's; and so reached London again on the Monday evening. Tired; but for once, one is glad to record, surprisingly little the worse. Another ordeal was over, and he knew now that it had been another triumph. And he was still Chancellor; it was this knowledge, almost undoubtedly, that spared him the worst reaction. The first night, as it were, was over, but he was guaranteed a lifelong run. With his own share all, or nearly all, behind the scenes now. Secret responsibilities, secret decisions, secret academic-political power. It came to him at one moment that if he entered the House of Lords he could do still more for Scottish education, and if he had been a little more positive he might even have tied himself up in this way. But no. The other Barriers knew better. They decided, and were unquestionably correct as well as merciful to do so, that he should wake from this dream in time. Yet he was still Chancellor of Edinburgh University, and a very good Chancellor too.

Speech on November 12th at the dinner of the Edinburgh University Club of London, at the Café Royal. Chairman's speech

on December 2nd at a dinner at the Guildhall in support of the rebuilding fund of the Great Ormond Street Hospital. But in the midst of these other preparations and performances he had also been passing the final proofs of *The Greenwood Hat*. It was to be appropriately bound in green, and issued with the technical assistance of Peter. But still privately. Still only in an edition of fifty copies. To be ready for distribution as a kind of early Christmas present. A list was drawn up of carefully-selected friends. An inscription for each of them. A pile of parcels ready to go off. And now you would think—wouldn't you?—that in a day or two, or perhaps, at the very outside, in a week or two, an equal number of grateful and appreciative letters would be coming back. For consider what this gift should mean. Months of work, very considerable expense—for the book was illustrated with photographs and facsimiles, too—and in the end a present which no one else could provide. Barrie, who still felt—for all those confessions and revelations in his speeches—that his early days were one of the great secrets of literary history, has lifted the veil for the chosen few. Delicately and skilfully he has told the story in his own words. You are invited to enter his own mind, and to see from it what he sees as he looks back to the legendary days of the *St. James's Gazette*. And even if no one else can feel quite that lure or charm in some of the old articles, there are still twenty-five chapters of unique autobiography as well.

Perhaps we have now prepared you for what happened. This was 1930. Barrie was seventy. It is just possible that he hoped for too much for some of the later vintage among his friends. But in any case there weren't fifty thank-letters. One wouldn't like to say how many there were, or how many of these, again, must fail for one reason or another to strike exactly the right, and admittedly elusive, note. Some did their best, and some were luckier than others. But some, alas, seemed to imagine that *The Greenwood Hat* was merely a glorified Christmas-card, and never acknowledged its receipt at all. Black marks for these. Forgiveness, perhaps, even from the author in the end. But scars on his secret soul as well. What a wretched, unnecessary disappointment at the end of a long game of combined mystification and self-expression; to honour one's own book above all others, and then to have it treated like a circular from the stores.

He hadn't learnt, you see, that some people only value what they



buy, and only pay attention to the books with big advertisements and long reviews. He had thought— Well, never mind what he had thought; but the fun had gone out of *The Greenwood Hat*, for Barrie, by the end of the month. He had chosen his own public this time. He had dodged the other public. And the almost inevitable result had left him feeling flat and sore. Nemesis, if you like; but even as an offset to the applause at all the speeches this year, he didn't really deserve it. He wouldn't republish. The attempt to bring the past and present together had served its purpose for twelve months, but at the end of them he could only feel that he was back where he had been at the start. Still longing to write, still lacking the big theme, and still hating the thought of writing anything else for money. The mere love of taking pains could never make this life entrancing. Prospero still clung to his magic staff, but the elves and spirits were confused by his instructions. They couldn't tell, sometimes, whether he were urging them on or trying to call them back.

Cynthia had been ill and away since the triumph of Edinburgh. Now, in December, she was back; but it was Barrie's turn. A bad cold. Doctor. Depression. All the attendant circumstances of Christmas two years ago, with a house-party waiting in the country, Barrie in bed at the flat, and his secretary as nearly as possible in two places at once. There were some unofficial bulletins in the papers that alarmed his friends, but then they ceased, and one gathered, correctly, that he was beginning to mend. Slowly. The depression still lingered, well into the new year. He had missed the rehearsals of *Peter Pan* again, which was now filling the seats at the Palladium—at matinées only, with a twice-nightly variety bill to follow—but could hardly hope to fill the stage. One or two of the old pirates were still carrying on, but there was a new Smee. George Shelton, though he lived on in retirement for nearly two more years, had now vanished from the familiar scenes. Irreplaceably; but, of course, *Peter Pan* was now twenty-six years old.

1931. The depression beginning to lift. Barrie and the Asquiths at the Royal Albion Hotel. Barrie playing Midget Golf and other games of skill on the pier. And feeling better. And suddenly beginning to write again, after all.

Those delvings into the past had released something. The old

articles, the old notes, and the return to Kirriemuir, had all set the secret processes to work. He was writing a story, by old and new methods. It began, as *Auld Licht Idylls* had once begun, in the first person, in bitter wintry weather, and in a glen. It was to be another period piece. He didn't know yet how long it was going to be, for the pen would undoubtedly have to settle that. But it was to be *serie* this time. There were to be more shivers in it than came from the frozen blasts. He was to be a minister, not a schoolmaster. He was to tell a love story that was also a ghost story. He was to make it as Scotch as any story could possibly be made. It was to be a kind of parable, but he would neither seek nor press the interpretation. It was to be a poem, in the most skilfully-wrought of all his prose. It was to be the essence of all strange legends of the glens, and of course it was to be an essence of the author, too. A cry for the unattainable. Nostalgia for the Scotland of his youth. And mystery, deep mystery, not only for the readers, but for him who would sometimes beckon to his own story and then let it wander off by itself.

Thirty years and more since the pen had last turned to these scenes. But it hadn't forgotten them, and the long, long pause had stored up an immense reserve. If he had chosen, *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan* could easily have become another novel. But he wouldn't let it. It should take its own time. It should seem sometimes to be the most leisurely story in the world. But he was watching it, and would see to it that this was only an illusion. For he knew all the secrets of compression now, including even the secret of how to linger and still keep to the one, straight path. And, besides, he didn't want to write a novel. He wanted to tell this story exactly as it wished to be told.

Then perhaps there would be another one. Or perhaps there wouldn't. But he wasn't thinking of publishers, or of editors, or even—in anything remotely resembling the ordinary professional attitude—of readers. He was as bewitched as his hero. He *was* the hero, as he wrote and wrote. Magic, then, in the Royal Albion Hotel at Brighton. Time and space both defeated, as he slipped back into the sixties and the glens beyond Kirriemuir. Then he came out of the cloud again, to be greeted by Harry Preston with offerings of champagne and cigars, to be addressed by this inimitable character as "My Lord and Master," or to play games of skill with Simon Asquith on the Palace Pier.

The story returned to London with him, with a clearer outline, but with weeks of work on it still lying ahead. And then there was a strange interruption. Gabriel Wells—who, as you may remember, had paid 2,300 guineas for the manuscript of *The Twelve-Pound Look*—had recently come into possession of one of the two manuscripts of *The Little Minister*. But as in this version a number of pages were missing, he now approached the author and offered him a thousand pounds to re-write them. What would you have expected to happen then? Would you have been very much surprised if Mr. Wells had met with the coldest form of rebuff?

But he didn't. The same Barrie who had written his last book for nothing, and shuddered whenever the market value of his manuscripts or first editions was mentioned, must either have remembered that those 2,300 guineas had gone to a literary charity, have yielded to a personality which was at least invincible in the sale room, or else—just as likely—suddenly have been tempted by the mere fun of forging his own hand. For without forgery he couldn't possibly have obliged. He had to switch back not only to the characteristics of forty years ago, but to the right-handed writing which he had virtually abandoned since the year after the war. So it was a game. It was also a most ingenious method of writing for money without doing anything of the sort. It could be regarded as Barrie playing a trick on Barrie; and the task kept him distinctly entertained for several weeks.

It was Gabriel Wells, also, who persuaded him to sit to Jo Davidson, the American sculptor, for the bust that was completed this spring. Easter, after another heavy cold, was spent at Stanway. There was the usual evening at a restaurant with Cynthia, to celebrate his birthday. The following week-end he was at Mells. And early in June the Winters were once more his guests. Now he had finished his experiment in calligraphy, but the new story—though it was now clear that it would run to less than twenty thousand words—was still occupying a great deal of his time. The twenty thousand words, in fact, took the best part of six months altogether—though in Grenville Street he must often have covered as many pages in a week—and the last stretch was even more laborious than the first. But they were finished by the beginning of July, and as they were sent off to be typed, his spirits rose. He still hadn't decided what to do with them; whether the story was now to be issued as a very short book, to appear—but if so it would have to

be serialised—in some magazine, or again to be circulated only among his friends. Meanwhile, he continued to re-read it, knew that it was worthy of him, and so set off for the eleventh August at Stanway.

Something like forty guests again during the four or five weeks, including Birrell, the Galsworthys, and George Moore. Attraction of opposites in this last case? Not entirely, though one can think of a hundred ways in which the two men and writers were poles apart. But they were both ink-lovers, they could both talk, and each appreciated quite as much in the other as he secretly criticised or even disliked. Some very ambrosial evenings. More of them, as always, with the enchanting Birrell—over eighty now, but only still further mellowed by the years. Constant golf-croquet, which must still be played immediately after lunch. Regular attendance at the village cricket matches. And acting, on Simon Asquith's twelfth birthday, when Barrie devised a cricketing play, in the course of which he and the Stanway gamekeeper fought a mock-duel with stumps.

It all ended, this year, with the end of August, and on September 2nd he was at Dorchester, to unveil Eric Kennington's memorial statue of Hardy, with another speech. Thence, almost at once, to the Olivers at Edgerston for a week. And so back to London. Sad news awaited him. "I know very well, for my part," he must write, on September 11th, "I am shorn of a friend such as I cannot make again." Lady Lewis, who had been this friend for nearly half his life, had died at her home of kindness and hospitality in Portland Place. Soon, now, it would be sold, and the housebreakers would start pulling it down.

Already other housebreakers were at work much nearer at hand. The Hotel Cecil, which was no beauty, but for twenty-two years had been the background to Barrie's view along Adelphi Terrace, was now dissolving under their picks, in order that an even larger structure might rise in its place. For a while the view would expand, and then as Shell-Mex House towered over the river and against the sky, and as at night-time its flood-lights destroyed the old darkness, there was a new and bigger barrier to the east. The threatened eighteenth-century buildings seemed to shrink. Even Barrie was thinking of leaving now, and at one moment went as far as looking over a little house in Pickering Place, off St. James's Street. But then stoicism and fatalism returned, and the more immediate threat again withdrew. Change, though, whenever he

looked out of his study window. A big change, only a hundred yards away.

Political changes, too. England off the gold standard. A new coalition. And now, in October, a general election with MacDonald and Baldwin as members of the same cabinet, so that Barrie could vote for them both. As he did, with enthusiasm and excitement, and unquestionably backed the winning side. Majority of four hundred and twenty-five for the National Government; the biggest there had ever been. It represented fear as much as hope, and one wouldn't like to say how many voters knew what the gold standard was. But the crisis was over, or was being dealt with, and some kind of danger had gone. Or so it seemed—though history was now always a little ahead of its students—in the autumn of 1931.

More illness—a chill, a temperature, and sleeplessness—in November, and nearly a fortnight in bed. But a solution had been found for the problem of *Miss Julie Logan*. Curious and characteristic. A method of placing a twenty-thousand word story before the public, and at the same time retaining his new and secret amateur status. He had offered it, without payment, to the editor of *The Times*; a periodical, as is well known, that never prints fiction at all. But it was the leading newspaper in the English language. Barrie had come to look on it as his own Court Circular. And its editor didn't prove to be bound by precedent to the extent of declining such an offer from such a source. It was arranged, more secretly than ever, that *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan* should appear as a special supplement to the issue published on Christmas eve. A Christmas present to *The Times* readers. A surprise—though there would be announcements as the date drew near—to compel their widespread and important attention. Probably the best shop-window for any story in the world. But to be opened for one day only, so that you can see how little economic justification there was for paying the author, even if he had wanted to be paid.

This, then, was the solution. But of course there were complications as well. For of course it attracted a great deal of notice—and would have, anyhow, even if there hadn't been a leading article on the same day pointing out how good it was—and of course the next thing was that a lot of people who either didn't take in *The Times*, or had been preoccupied with other aspects of Christmas, wrote to ask for copies of the supplement. That the management then decided to re-issue it on special paper at a shilling. That the

public then either jibbed at this price or thought that an eight-page booklet measuring eighteen and a half by twelve inches would be rather a nuisance to have about the house, and in any case were now almost as backward as they had been urgent a few days before. And that by the time Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton were at last allowed to publish it as another volume in their uniform edition—which wasn't until the following autumn—the cream had been skimmed, the price for the twenty thousand words in cloth covers had risen to three shillings and sixpence, and though of course it sold, it was unhappily anything but a best-seller. So that again the mysterious Barrie would be sensitively annoyed; as he overlooked the fact that his own ingenuity had actually produced this result. Rather a sad ending—perhaps with a professional moral—to the story of this Wintry Tale. But something far sadder behind it. Whatever its length or luck might be, Barrie had now written his last book.

It was in this December that Peter Llewelyn Davies's engagement was announced. He had waited longer than his brothers, but like them he had now found very much the right wife. One of Lord Ruthven's twin daughters. Barrie was pleased that her name was Margaret, though he was one of the few people who ever used it. Naturally, also, he approved her decorative appearance; but as for intimacy with any of what one might call the wards-in-law, this never seemed to be part of the plan. Perhaps he was a little nervous of the undefined relationship. Or expected to be courted a little more than they dared. Or concealed his own feelings because he didn't really quite know what they were. The main point is that Peter was married in the following March, and would be very happily married too. He would still come in to lunch at the flat, from his office in Henrietta Street, and would still, as Barrie had said once before, be everything that was kind. But any attitude of patriarchy was now always directed much more elsewhere.

To Stanway for the end of the year. A quiet visit, with rather a silent guest. Some scenes from *Macbeth* again, by Simon and a cousin—painstakingly and inspiringly directed by J.M.B. A lunch at Broadway with the de Navarros. And so back to the Adelphi, to prepare for a series of engagements and speeches in Edinburgh.

January 27th, 1932. Opening of a health exhibition in the

Waveley Market, which had been organised in aid of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. The main part of Barrie's address was an account—the first public admission that there had ever been such a thing—of his hospital at Bettancourt. But one has to admit that, more than sixteen years afterwards, he drew very largely on his imagination; for all that time of course there had been processes at work. On the following day he presided, in his Chancellor's robes, and made two more speeches, when the Prime Minister opened the two new University Institutes of Geology and Engineering. And two nights later, on Saturday January 30th, he was the principal guest at a dinner given by the Edinburgh and East of Scotland district of the Institute of Journalists, where he made yet another speech, of an almost purely autobiographical nature, largely paraphrased from *The Greenwood Hat*. However, as nobody knew this, it was none the less effective, and journalists were certainly the right audience to be told of another journalist's early days. They laughed, they cheered, some of them made shorthand notes—so that there it all was in the Press again on the Monday morning. And then, on the Wednesday, after a pretty heavy week of it, Barrie returned to London. The note-book goes straight into entries for another speech. If he hadn't remembered it himself, someone in Edinburgh has clearly reminded him that the centenary of Sir Walter Scott's death will fall due in September, and he is full of ideas for celebrating this, in conjunction with the University, in his own way. Perhaps he can bring Burns into it. Certainly there is a chance for more about Mary Queen of Scots. Or shall he make another book of it, after all? Or a play? As the months go by he still hesitates, ponders and finds less support from the University than he had hoped. Finally, to his disappointment, the plan breaks down. He will be in Scotland, it is true, when the date comes round, and will attend a tribute of another kind. But the notes will remain notes and then gradually drift off elsewhere. There is no clear call in any one direction yet.

"Barrie Dodges The Camera. Escape by Church's Third Door." These were the odd headlines to the account of Peter's wedding, on March 10th, at which Nico was Best Man. A fortnight later Barrie was down at Torquay, with Cynthia, Beb, Simon, and Lady Wernyss. Much anxiety this spring about Beb's eyesight, the state of which must now permanently limit his output as an author, as well as ending his work as a publisher's reader for good. Something else

was wrong with him—the war, of course, which still sought out its victims and would do so as long as they lived—and in the autumn it would all flare up into an illness of many months, during which anxiety would be a very mild word indeed. Meanwhile, Cynthia must take him out to a Swiss oculist, for a long course of treatment, and so vanish for a while from the flat. Barrie much worried, and of course incessantly and insistently thoughtful. What else do you imagine that he would have been?

There was no Cynthia in any case to help to organise a new plan that was afoot. It had come to Barrie that he would give a lunch-party to beat all other lunch-parties, in his book-lined study, in celebration of Lord Grey of Fallodon's seventieth birthday. This actually fell toward the end of April, but the guests were bidden for Wednesday, May 4th. And here are some of the thirty-four who accepted and arrived. Lord Grey, the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Baldwin, the American and French Ambassadors, Sir John Simon, W. S. Morrison, Neville Chamberlain, Sir Herbert Samuel, Sir Reginald Poole—now senior partner in the firm of Messrs. Lewis and Lewis—J. R. Clynes, Walter Runciman, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Lord Snowden, Lord Salisbury, Lord Londonderry, Sir Roger Keyes, John Buchan, Winston Churchill, Augustine Birrell, Geoffrey Dawson, J. A. Spender, Lord Macmillan, Sir Donald Maclean, Sir Douglas Shields, T. L. Gilmour, and Bernard Freyberg. A gathering, as you may see, of very considerable distinction. The host, in point of fact, showing what he could do when he gave his mind to it, and when he really wanted to honour a friend. One impressive lift-load after another, alighting on the top landing and crossing the threshold of the flat. Barrie's arm swinging round to greet them. Barrie far from unconscious of another secret triumph. Barrie in a very special manifestation as the ultimate arbiter of fame. And Barrie without a trace of the notorious shyness.

After lunch he made a speech, about his principal guest and his canary. The Prime Minister spoke. So did Mr. Baldwin and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Then Lord Grey expressed his thanks. And finally Mr. Churchill proposed the health of the host. Then the amazing lunch-party disintegrated, and the temporary tables were removed. And then, and not till then, an account of the proceedings was released for publication in *The Times*. At the last moment, therefore, there was a limit to the secrecy, or a select body



of readers might now be told what they had missed. Psychological dissection is again a bit flummoxed by the whole notable affair. But it was certainly undertaken, and carried through from beginning to end, with enormous efficiency and effect.

Five days later the host was seventy-two. His secretary, home for a short while from Switzerland, dined with him, and after dinner he read her *Ibsen's Ghost*. For years he had hardly given it a thought, but recently he had come across a copy, and now it interested him just as much as the old articles. There was still no story to touch his own, and the further he got away from the early chapters, the more they lingered in his mind.

In the middle of May there was another visit to Stanway. In June the Winters came to stay again; Sir Donald Maclean died; and Barrie failed to elude a Press photographer when he stood as godfather, a few days later, to J. B. Priestley's infant son. In July he was to have presented the prizes—by request of Sir Reginald Poole—at Bedford School, and had prepared some of his speech, when he was taken ill again with another attack of bronchitis. He was only in bed for a few days, and was able to return to Stanway, in his alternative capacity as tenant and host, by the beginning of August. But during this twelfth festival, which also proved to be the last, he was never really well, and often kept to his own little room. Nevertheless, there were between thirty and forty guests—including the Galsworthys, and the Chestertons, and H. G. Wells, and Walter de la Mare—and still occasions when the host appeared and took part in the games. And though he was worse, apparently, towards the end of the month, there was then a sudden improvement during the last few days.

Back to London. Down to Brighton, while the Asquiths were in lodgings at Saltdean, and more skee-ball and other pastimes on the pier. Then up to the Olivers' at Jedburgh, for the rest of September. At Mrs. Oliver's suggestion, which would have gone much further with more backing, the Walter Scott centenary was celebrated by the lighting of a chain of beacons from Berwick along the Middle Marches. The night—September 21st—was still and starlit, with a waning moon rising later on, and Barrie and his host and hostess drove up over Carter Fell to Redesdale, in the first of a long procession of cars. Then at midnight the fires were lit, and the flames on the unseen hill-tops dotted the vast expanse. Very beautiful, very moving, and a true tribute to the hero whose country

this was. Barrie silent and happy. Far happier, there can be little doubt, than if he had been delivering the speech that he had once planned. Now some of the smaller beacons were fading, and it was time to turn back. Down the winding road again, with the moon lighting the way, and so home for the rest of another happy visit, lasting for a further ten days.

London again, at the beginning of October; and the start of a new note-book, which is now also the last. "*Authors*," it says on the first page. "If I was young to-day I wdn't write as I did." And then: "Have sometimes thought wrote very daringly, but no one noticed it." These entries indicate that he has already promised to take the Chair at a dinner of the Authors' Club in December. But meanwhile, and on the next page, he is also looking a full year ahead; to the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Edinburgh University, which will certainly involve another address. "Might speak," he reflects, "of *Nottingham Journal* 50 yrs ago (my articles about tercentenary)." One sees how the first thought, almost always, is of the story that still fascinates him most. But now, in the present chapter, everything is overshadowed by Beba Asquith's illness, which began in this October and lasted well into the new year. Indeed, he could hardly have been iller. Cynthia could seldom even leave the house, and once more Barrie was paying almost daily visits, with his special brand of sympathy and help. Yet needing them also, even when he seemed to be giving most. Dark weeks, going on and on and on.

But he kept his engagement with the Authors' Club, at Grosvenor House on the evening of December 12th. For some reason he had decided to propose the toast of "The Ladies and Literature," but having done so paid little further attention to this text. There was a notion, but presently he wandered away from it, of making this speech a kind of testament; or bequeathing various qualities and intangible offerings to the assembled authors. And once more he concluded with an affirmation of his belief in the importance of friendship and understanding with the United States. A thinking-aloud speech, with a note of farewell in it. But his mind wasn't really on his task to-night. There was still far too much anxiety about something else.

And then he fell ill again himself, with a mixture of bronchitis and influenza. No thought or possibility of any Christmas gathering this year. As some of the symptoms subsided, he chose to play

one of his most alarming parts. To prolong his own feverish fancies, and to imagine that his memory was failing. Perhaps he only wanted to be told that it wasn't, but the method of achieving this involved the most convincing series of suggestions that it was. Impossible to be firm or fierce with him. Impossible to feel anything but tormenting pity. Yet the weight again fell on Cynthia, who had been bearing more than enough already. Then, in the middle of January, and as Beb at last seemed better, Barrie was persuaded to move into Sir Douglas Shields's home, where he remained, with many ups and downs, for about three weeks.

Two more deaths in this dark season. Death, at the end of December, of Lord Northbourne, Nico's father-in-law and close friend. A much-loved man, whom Barrie had learnt to love as well, but whose funeral he was too ill to attend. And then, after two months of heart-breaking illness, more than courageously borne, death of John Galsworthy on the last day of January. There has been no nobler name in all the pages of this book. Barrie's friend since the days at Leinster Corner, his neighbour for five years in the Adelphi, his guest so often in the summers at Stanway. Too wise to be as simple as he seemed, yet sometimes Barrie had teased him for his incorruptible sense of honour, and J.G. had smiled patiently and remained as honourable as before. But he had never teased Barrie, for kindness and understanding were always there, not only on the surface, but in the very depths of his heart. Now he was dead, and presently his ashes would be scattered on the high hill where he had ridden so often, above his Sussex home. Meanwhile, on February 9th, there was a memorial service in Westminster Abbey, and Barrie and Sir Douglas Shields left the Park Lane nursing-home together in order to attend.

Barrie far from well still, but Beb Asquith suddenly much worse. Barrie returns to the flat and takes in Simon—now a day-boy at Westminster—as a guest. Is still unwell and goes down to Shields's house at Farnham Common. Back by the end of February. Well enough, for the moment, to accompany Cynthia on a long journey to another funeral, for now it is their very dear friend, Lady Guendolen Cecil, who has tragically gone. Then it seems that both Barrie and Beb are better again, though Cynthia, as can well be imagined, is now in the doctor's hands. Plans are made to spend Easter, which was in the middle of April this year, at Stanway.

Barrie got down there on April 13th. Three days later, or on

Easter Sunday itself, he started another cold. It grew rapidly worse, his temperature shot up again, and Cynthia telephoned for Shields, who arrived at once. She was also able to secure Nurse Thomlinson, who had been looking after Beb, and must here and now be honoured as one who did more for Barrie in the remaining years than can ever conceivably be expressed. He liked her at once. He leant on her. There were no secrets from Nurse Thomlinson, but indeed there was an endless giving-out of patience and strength. She comes and goes in the record now, so often that sometimes her presence in yet another bout of illness may come to be assumed. But without her there can be very little question that the record might have ended in this April of 1933.

For this was the worst illness since the great illness of 1894. It involved something virtually indistinguishable from pneumonia, with advances and retreats, with great pain, and with appalling weakness and depression. Two nurses now. Shields recalled for a second visit. High temperature. Bad pulse. The patient, though hardly able to breathe, suddenly discovered to be smoking his pipe in bed. A little better. Worse than ever. And so it went on, until at the beginning of May he was just well enough to be moved in an ambulance, accompanied by his secretary and Nurse Thomlinson, back to the Park Lane home. Anxiety diminished, though he was still very much of an invalid, and still terribly depressed. Cynthia felt justified in taking Beb on a three weeks' cruise, and soon after they had started, Barrie, with Nurse Thomlinson still in attendance, returned to the flat. On his seventy-third birthday, by a very tactful coincidence, Peter Davies's wife gave birth to a son. From the christening, six weeks later, at which Barrie was one of the god-fathers, he emerged with the names of Ruthven Barrie Llewelyn Davics. But as a matter of fact, we haven't really finished with April.

An announcement on April 27th. "Sir James Barrie, as President of the Society of Authors, has addressed the following letter to the German Ambassador in London." The first shadow across these pages of war returning. For though it may be taken, in the circumstances, that the President of the Society of Authors had signed rather than drafted this letter, it would convey his own as well as his Council's opinion that the proscription of certain distinguished German writers by their own countrymen was something to be very deeply deplored. Yet of course this protest will have no effect whatever on the spirit of intolerance that now has the new Germany

in its grip. It may cause a little temporary annoyance; but the prescription, "the malice of political and racial prejudices," will continue, and by this time has already extended to the German stage as well. One of its leading stars, born and brought up in Vienna, has found it best, during the last year or so, to transfer her talents to film-work in Paris. As each month has gone by, it has been clearer that she has become an exile. There are links, however, with England also, for already she has played half-a-dozen Shakespeare heroines, and St. Joan, and Mrs. Cheyney, and Tessa in the Berlin version of *The Constant Nymph*. When Barrie signed that letter, he hadn't even heard of her; but there was an English manager—the cleverest and most adventurous of them all now—who knew as much as anyone in the world about foreign stars, and vehicles, and how to bring them together. Do you see how the ingredients for the last chapter were already being prepared?

Barrie was in bed again, with a fresh chill, at the end of May, but he had been well enough meanwhile to write a short article—about his two handwritings—for a friend's Etonian son, who was joint editor of a special Fourth-of-June magazine. By the time it was on sale, though, something had happened to his left hand, too. For several weeks he couldn't hold a pen with it, either, and was in a very dismal state. But as the condition gradually yielded to treatment, he was beginning to be better in other ways as well. The summer helped, of course. And something else, also. In the middle of June he went down with Nurse Thomlinson to Margate, and there she suddenly became the invalid and Barrie became the nurse. The unexpected exchange of rôles seemed to do him a power of good. While presently, with more treatment, he would regain the use of his right hand, and so be able to use whichever he chose.

On July 4th, nearly two months after the real anniversary, he had his birthday dinner with Cynthia at the Ritz. Another visit to Mells. Another scare about the demolition of the Adelphi, leading to the inspection of rooms—but no more than this—in Lincoln's Inn. The loss of another very old friend in Anthony Hope. A visit with Miss Ishbel MacDonald to an East-end girls' school, where he tried to throw a stamp on the ceiling, and surprisingly failed. But he was still getting better. Nerves not at all right—that was the chief trouble after the long illness—but otherwise both looking and

feeling stronger. And so, at the beginning of August, off to Scotland. To Balnaboth House, in Glen Prosen, about twelve miles north of Kirriemuir; a medium-sized, white-walled, grey-roofed house, standing by itself near the rushing river, with its garden surrounded on all sides by the coloured wildness of the glen. This had been rented from its owner for about a month.

One can only say that there were various reasons why the summers at Stanway had come to an end. Their scale had been a heavier responsibility for the last few years. There was the strong pull, all the time now, from Scotland. And no doubt there is a natural reluctance to return anywhere for a holiday where one has just been seriously ill. So Balnaboth was the choice, and Barrie, Simon, and Frank Thurston all went up by the night train to Forfar on August 2nd, and drove out by car. Closely followed by the other three Asquiths—Michael, just nineteen now, was between Winchester and Balliol—and by other guests, for shorter or longer visits, as well. Lady Wemyss, Elizabeth Lucas, Mrs. Oliver, Nurse Thomlinson. Peter and his wife. Algernon Cecil. Stephen Gwynn. Jack's little boy. The two young Faulkners. And another little boy—Dick Rowe—with whose family there were some very long-established links. These more or less made up the floating party, and once more—as on some of the earlier Scotch holidays—the only complaint to be made of the weather was that it was too fine to fish.

The host was curiously excited by it all; by this fresh view of the scenes of his childhood, and by the constant homage of pilgrims from Kirriemuir. So much was he back in the past that when they came out, as they naturally did, by car, he still felt that they had taken a long journey, and pressed them to stay on and rest before their return; thereby often tiring himself far more than there was any real need. There was a running and almost continuous siege by reporters and photographers. In a moment of sentiment he had undertaken to open another Kirriemuir bazaar. All this made it much less of a holiday than it ought to have been. But of course he was under no one's orders. He exhausted himself, worked himself up, all but collapsed, and then instantly dipped into some amazing reserve of strength again. Yet whether he knew it or not, he was living very much on his nerves this August, and there were often tiring and anxious moments for the others as well.

He played golf-croquet, fished a little, so far as the drought allowed, but there were none of the long walks and no climbing on

the hills. Several visits to the Airlies. Several visits, and welcome ones, from the original Robb. Darts, in the absence of shuffleboard, the chief game of skill after dinner. And again one evening—it must have been almost the last time—a revival of Irving in *The Bells*. On August 14th Ramsay MacDonald, still Prime Minister, and his daughter Sheila drove over from Lossiemouth, and spent the night; with a very late session of talk for J. R. M. and J. M. B. Then followed two still more memorable occasions. On August 20th—Simon's fourteenth birthday—their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York, with Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, came over from Glamis for tea. Crackers on the table, and games in the garden afterwards. Barrie as full of charm and courtesy as even he knew how to be; though he did rather startle some of the on-lookers by marching ahead of the Duke through a doorway.

On the next day there was a return visit—and now it was Princess Margaret's birthday—to Glamis. Barrie had the privilege of sitting beside her at tea. Some of her presents were on the table, "and they seemed to me," he wrote afterwards, for one of Cynthia's books, *The King's Daughters*, "to be as simple things that might have come from sixpenny shops, but she was in a frenzy of glee about them, especially about one to which she had given the place of honour by her plate. I said to her as one astounded:

"'Is that really your very own?'"

"And she saw how I envied her and immediately placed it between us with the words:

"'It is yours *and* mine.'"

Words not likely to be forgotten; least of all when they came from a Princess on her third birthday. But in these two days Barrie had put his spell on both the royal children; and again there was another phrase that came back to him from the younger. His name had been mentioned, and instantly she had said: "I know that man. He is my greatest friend, and I am *his* greatest friend." When he was told of this, once more the words went into the secret depths. Lingered there, as well they might, and would be drawn up again presently—together with the first inimitable example of childish tact—for use in a play of which he as yet knew no more than the little Princess. We shall come to the last part of that story very, very near the end.

Back to Balnaboth. Visitors still coming and going. Another court, as it were, with its own ruler and his own command invita-

uons to the townspeople, on this side of Kirriemuir. And so, on August 26th, to the opening ceremony of the bazaar in aid of the town band. Immense crowds in the streets. The Town Hall filled almost to bursting-point, and with a mixture of dignitaries and friends on the platform. Speech of praise and welcome by the provost. Speech by Sir James Barrie about what Princess Margaret had said to him; about his canary again; and about an historical clarinet, which he auctioned, for which he accepted his own bid of fifty pounds, and then presented to the town. A vote of thanks. Another short speech, with a reference—do you remember her?—to Bell Lunan, his neighbour of seventy years ago. And so into the car again, and home. But the main speech had been a long one, the result of long preparation, and with even more than the usual amount of acting. He had felt the strain of it beforehand, and was obviously fatigued when it was over. More nerviness at Balnaboth, which sometimes seemed to communicate itself to the very air. Then touches and traces of the old Scotch holidays. The real trouble, no doubt, was the constant contrast between past and present, the inner turmoil that this was always stirring up, and the general state of his health. On the whole, and for all the high-lights, it was a curiously exacting time.

At the beginning of September the remnants of the party broke up, and the host went on to St. Andrews for a short visit to Sir James and Lady Irvine. Almost immediately the glamour of Glen Prosen returned. As he looked back, even a few days later, he could remember nothing but happiness and triumph. As the weeks went by, Balnaboth became the symbol of something like paradise, and suddenly it seemed quite true that it had done him a world of good. He was in a better bodily and mental condition than he had been for years. He put it all down to Scotland, and indeed no one could possibly attribute it to anything else. A most baffling recovery, nevertheless, for those who had seen him on the spot. Antaeus with delayed action? It almost seemed like it, as more and more strength and cheerfulness returned.

He was writing again. A little article, on his memories of Carlyle, for the *Edinburgh University Journal*. And a series of speeches for the forthcoming anniversary celebrations. The note-book is alive again, and not only on these subjects. There might be more articles. There might even—though there is nothing very clear or definite yet—be another play. Yet the sadness is still in the very near back-



ground. It was in this September that Gilmour's last, long illness began. He was still a man of such intense activity and so many interests that no doctor could force him to take the necessary rest. In November there would be a serious breakdown, and thereafter it would be a story of courage and fresh setbacks, but never of any real recovery in health. Barrie and he will still be seeing each other, and Gilmour may still be well enough, sometimes, to pay another visit to the flat. But already, fifty years after their first meeting, the oldest friend is setting off on the last journey of all. No ending ever, in this world, to the friendship. But little of T. L. Gilmour in the rest of the main record now.

On Thursday, October 26th, its Chancellor set off for Edinburgh once more, and with a very full programme ahead. A civic reception in the Assembly Rooms on the Friday evening, with speeches by the Lord Provost and by Barrie as principal guest. A graduation ceremony on Saturday morning, in the McEwan Hall, with another speech. And a third speech in the afternoon, at the opening of a new educational institute for working-class students. More dinners, meetings, receptions, and so forth, for several more days. Then on the Wednesday to the Olivers', at Edgerston, for a couple of nights—his last visit here, again for the sad reason that this was now the last year of his host's life—and so, on the Friday evening, back again to the Adelphi. But none the worse for it all. The new access of strength had carried him through everything. He had enjoyed himself. He had had another series of successes. And almost at once he was again busy with his pen.

The note-book shows the birth of this new idea. "Newspaper Photography and how I've gone crazy about it—might not be a bad subject. It cd be an anonymous letter signed 'Septuagenarian.'" Or later, for the notes run on for several pages, it might be another speech. But in the end it was a letter after all; it was signed, revealingly to those who had read their copies of *The Greenwood Hat*, "Mr. Anon"; and it appeared, on November 11th, on the leader page of *The Times*. An odd but enthusiastic tribute to the photographs which were now regularly appearing three pages further on. The writer indeed seems quite crazy about them—particularly about a picture of an express train taken from the footplate—and suggests that he should become a photographer himself and join the staff. Queer? Very. But *The Times* is still playing the game, whatever

it is, prints the letter, reprints the photograph, and will continue, as everyone knows, to employ its own staff photographers with admirable and distinguished results. Must one or can one interpret what Barrie thought he was up to? It seems that he had seen himself in yet another impersonation—dashing about the country with a camera, and discovering further beauties which *The Times* had overlooked—and that he is still feeling so well that he has to say so in print. "*Photography*," the notes conclude, "might be the first of a series of *Confidences* between self and editor." The notion instantly develops. The series might be on the "Home life of Mr. Anon"—how he still itches to write about himself, but mysteriously, and only for his own, special *Times*. Yet here, in fact, this particular notion ends. He has toyed with it, he is still thinking of it, but something else is going to thrust this and everything else aside. Quite soon now. It is coming towards him very nearly as fast as that express train. The last phase and the last chapter have almost begun.

He caught cold again a week after that letter in *The Times*, and one quite understands why Cynthia sent for Nurse Thomlinson and the doctor. But for once, happily and astonishingly, it was only an ordinary cold. He wasn't even depressed by it. He was saddened, while still in bed, by the death of another old friend—no more now will Augustine Birrell be seen pottering so decoratively about the streets of Chelsea—but there was still no dip for Barrie into the old abyss. He was taking special care of himself, almost as if for some definite purpose. But there was no reason to connect this—and neither he nor anyone else did—with the production on November 21st, at the Opera House, Manchester, by Charles B. Cochran, of a new play by the authoress of *The Constant Nymph*. Even when it came to the Apollo Theatre in London, about a fortnight later, and achieved instantaneous success, this still meant nothing particular to Barrie. He hardly ever went to the theatre now. He had got out of the habit. Except where his own friends were closely concerned, the old feeling of contempt for it—or a feeling that anyone of his age might have towards all that had changed—made an evening by the fireside far more to his taste. Apart from *Peter Pan* it was four years now since the last of his own West End revivals. He was a hermit. Already, you were to gather, he had anticipated this period of neglect. He was quite content—or so, again, you must join with him in pretending—that the world of the theatre should pass him

by. Sometimes it was his pleasure to suggest that he had never thought much of it anyhow.

It was a mixture, if one may say so, of pose and philosophy. It was a form of self-protection. It was a sign, no doubt, of some of the fatigue. No one, after the name and fortune that his plays had brought him, could accuse him of thinking in terms of sour grapes. It was true enough that he had been a giant among giants in his day, and that the theatre itself was no longer all that it had once been. Its new, strident rival, and the loss of so much of its own traditional mystery, had changed it all over the world. "In ten years," Lord Rolfe had said to the Earl of Carlton, in *Little Mary*, "we shall all be on the stage." Now thirty years had elapsed, and at least the old barriers and distinctions seemed to have gone for good. The levelling up and the levelling down had destroyed something in the land of make-believe as well. Frohman had seen it coming, and it had come. In his own Savoy Grill-Room actors and actresses now played the parts which some of them could no longer play on the magic boards. There was hardly a playhouse in London with a fixed or established policy to-day. No wonder Barrie looked back, and remembered, and preferred his memories to an electric gramophone in the orchestra pit and the new vogue for Christian names, and inaudibility, and golf. Or thought he did, when it had now become such an effort to leave his books or to sit somewhere where he couldn't smoke.

The mood changed sometimes. The theatre still pulled gently, and make-believe was still and always an essential part of his life. Impossible that he should abandon it altogether; but unless there were some special and now unexpected impulse, he would rather drift, and dream, and remain as he was. He would rather write speeches, or little articles, or letters signed "Septuagenarian," than force himself back into the theatrical fray. Unless, of course, he should suddenly and gloriously capture another idea. But this didn't seem likely, and meanwhile he wasn't unhappy or impatient as he still rested on his oars. He was still feeling well, too, and curiously contented and calm. A few days before Christmas he returned to Stanway, and was delighted to discover that even being back in the little bedroom where he had been so ill didn't, as he had half-feared, revive unwelcome ghosts. "I am having a nice quiet time," he writes on Christmas Eve, "and loaded with kindness, and Cynthia is the heart and soul of the gathering." He stayed just a week, and re-

turned to his flat by the end of the month. And that, of course, was the end of 1933.

## 24

Peter Scott, Captain Scott's son and Barrie's godson, was twenty-four now. He had inherited his father's physique together with his mother's talents—translated, however, from sculpture to painting—and was accordingly one of the most stalwart-looking artists that there can ever have been. Already, even at this age, he was making a considerable name for himself with his pictures of wildfowl. He was an expert sailor. He was a godson to be distinctly proud of, and Barrie, who had always kept in touch with him, though he had never been called on to do more than approve and admire, had recently been seeing him pretty regularly at the flat.

The reason, or the particular reason, for this was that Peter was painting his portrait. A change, in a sense, from the wildfowl; but it was a portrait that, as it went on, continued to please them both. It showed the big, open fireplace in the brown study, with a small but extraordinarily characteristic figure of Barrie seated there in his cave. They discussed it as it proceeded, so that the sitter sometimes collaborated. They talked of other things, too, and in these sympathetic conditions the picture took on a remarkable feeling of understanding and truth. By the end of January it was as good as finished, and then for a while it stood there, on a shelf in front of the books; until presently Miss Elisabeth Bergner bought it and took it away.

Miss Bergner. It was she, of course, who had played all those Shakespearian heroines and the other leading parts in Germany; who had then, under the direction of her husband, Paul Czinner, made films in Paris; and then—with Germany now closed to her, because of the spirit that had seized it—had been snapped up and starred by the great Cochran, in a kind of second edition of *The Constant Nymph*. As Gemma Jones, in Margaret Kennedy's *Escape Me Never*, she had triumphed not only over a pronounced foreign accent, but over everyone who had come crowding to see her act. This was the smash hit of the winter season. She was small, slight, wistful, and pathetic. She was abominably ill-treated in the play, and everyone was on her side from her first appearance, in a school-

girl's tunic, to the end of the appalling disasters and entanglements which she only just survived. The production had a glittering surface—trust Cochran, and Komisarjevsky, his director, for that—and the audience was flattered by a trip round Europe and further intimate glimpses of musical Bohemia; but the centre of it all was Miss Elisabeth Bergner, with her immense gift for making both stalls and gallery gulp. Ycs, it was a vehicle, at any rate by the time it reached Shaftesbury Avenue, and a very skillful vehicle, too. It was a superficially sophisticated *Peg o' My Heart*. It was the sort of play, in fact, which with any other leading lady would have made Barrie writhe, sink into deeper and deeper dejection, and then slip quietly out of his box. If he thought it worth while, he might have been very funny about it afterwards. But he did none of these things on or about January 20th, 1934, when Peter Scott persuaded him to visit the Apollo Theatre as his guest. The play went past him as a mere matter of acts, scenes, and a not very probable story. But Miss Bergner's performance touched and moved him where suddenly there was no defence.

A flashback to the elfin Miss Maude Adams, in *Rosemary*, at the Empire Theatre on Broadway, in October, 1896. Indeed, there was something of the same magic chemistry then. The sentimental biter bit. The secret determination to do everything possible and impossible so as to write for an actress like this.

Another flashback to the electric Mlle. Gaby Deslys, in *A La Carte* at the Palace Theatre, in the autumn of 1913. The same overwhelming impulse, but now he is a theatrical oligarch, with Frohman in the hollow of his hand. No obstacles this time. He merely announces his decision, and to all intents and purposes goes straight ahead. *Rosy Rapture* is a failure, where *The Little Minister* had been an outstanding international success; but in each case there was the same mystical stimulus, the same possessive attitude towards the source of inspiration, and the same strange mixture of gallantry and the professional main chance.

Now from the stage of the Apollo Theatre the spark was ignited again. There and then; though at what precise moment—whether when Miss Bergner was in her tunic, her knickerbockers, her skirt and jumper, or her beret and mackintosh—no one can say. But the further important point is that Peter Scott already knew her, and at the end of the performance he suggested that he should take Barrie round to see her in her dressing-room. So round they went.

Miss Bergner—again like Miss Adams, though with less resemblance to Mlle. Deslys—was one who did everything possible to avoid her admirers, and already, in the short time since her arrival in England, the legend of this elusiveness was well known. But Peter had the *entrée*, and there was no actress on earth who would have hidden herself from his unique companion. Barrie brought the spell with him, and used it at once. He paid some specially observant compliments as only he could pay them, and ended by asking her to come and see him at the flat.

It was a command, if you like. At any rate, the elusive Miss Bergner never dreamt of excusing herself. A few days later she was borne upwards in the lift, was admitted to the study, and encountered the spell again. Undoubtedly emanated a spell, or a further spell, of her own. They took things up not where they had left them in her dressing-room at the Apollo, but at once from several stages ahead. Questions, answers, Merlin employing all his magic, but this Nimuë already with magic to offer in exchange. He told her that he wanted to write a play for her. He didn't describe it, for the truth was that he still had no story to describe. But when he asked her what part she would choose for herself, this very remarkable actress was actually able to tell him. She would like, she said, to play the young David. David the giant-killer. The boy whom God had made into a hero. The boy with the mighty and tragic future still so far away.

Barrie listened, and something inside him stirred. The first necessity, no doubt, was that he should revise his own memories of the First Book of Samuel, about which his visitor seemed to know so much more than himself. But there was an oddness in her choice that was an irresistible challenge. It seemed at the moment to bring freedom from all the blind alleys up which he had followed so many of his own ideas. He was David himself suddenly—did he remember also that this was his father's and his little dead brother's name?—and youth and courage still sang to him as the greatest theme of all. His mind was racing now. He almost wanted to turn his visitor out, so that he could rush to a Bible and start making notes at once. But he seems to have made it clear in any case that he and no one else was to provide her with the part and the play. Can one guess her thoughts as she gathered this? Consider his position in the theatre. Think of this swift and extraordinary tribute of homage. Think how only a few months ago it must have seemed that she must start

her career all over again. Now she was starring in London's biggest box-office success, and within barely six weeks of its opening the most famous and successful of all living dramatists had announced his intention of writing her own play. It certainly looked like astonishing luck for Miss Bergner.

And a very big thing for Barrie. The blocked channels had suddenly been freed, and ideas were racing through them in the old tumultuous way. He saw the glimpse which all authors see at this moment of the finished work, of triumph, and in this case of a return to the theatre as a new and living force, and as the real interpreter of Miss Bergner's art. No one else, already, could understand her gifts and capabilities as he did. He pored over the Bible story, which came to him now with startling freshness too. A first act was already forming itself, and in urgent anxiety for impossible accuracy he sent out for books on Jewish history and customs as well. He could think and talk of nothing else. He was like a child with a new and utterly absorbing toy. He was at his desk again, making note after note, for action, detail, and dialogue. The first, great, glorious glimpse must of course retreat now, as it always does when the actual work begins, but he still felt inspired and exalted. The old zest had returned at last, as powerfully and gratefully as ever. He seemed years younger, though to some who watched there was a hint also—a disturbing hint—that he knew he was writing against time. For he was starting this masterpiece—that was to be understood from the first moment—at the age of seventy-three. And it couldn't only be youthful impatience that was making him pile up the fires and answer his own imperative signal of Full Steam Ahead.

There was immense secrecy, though. The world was to be stunned by J.M.B. in this new mantle which he still felt to be different from any that he had worn before; but habit and policy both insisted that the thunderclap should come from an apparently clear sky. So Cynthia, and presently a very few others, must have the responsibility of listening to his thoughts, and the agony—for it was nothing else, when one could so easily say too much or too little—of putting their appreciation and encouragement into the right words. But no one else must be allowed even to dream that he was doing any work at all. Not yet. There was a kind of superstition about this. And in the same way, though he was now seeing Miss Bergner constantly, though her name was somewhere in almost every private letter that he wrote, and he could hardly speak to anyone for five minutes with-

out mentioning it—but always with the utmost formality—again, nobody must be suffered to put two and two together, or ask what it all meant. That was forbidden. You knew it by very clear signs.

By the end of February he had finished the first draft of the first act or prologue, had adjusted the story to his own purposes by his own methods, and had established the character of David in the same way. Those swift, historical researches would, of course, never supply more than the background, but though he had controlled himself over David's mother, her youngest son was already a creation, almost entirely, of his own. There were bits of Barrie in him, bits of Miss Bergner, and very large bits of Simon Asquith and of other little boys whom the author had loved, and studied, and known. There were also, in these circumstances, inevitable traces of Peter Pan. It seemed, moreover, that this small, sensitive, imaginative David could have received very little religious instruction from his parents, while even the prophet Samuel was rather uncharacteristically obscure. But there was a marked air of promise and preparation, and the true rhythm of a story gathering strength. Suspense at the end of that first act. Admirable simplicity and dexterity in its final scene. Yet Barrie had rushed at it. The next part of the scenario was still shadowy, and he still hadn't dealt with Goliath, or Jonathan, or Saul.

He had hoped, perhaps, that the first impetus would help him; but though he flung himself into the second act, and still had those tantalising glimpses of the whole, a series of obstacles seemed suddenly to be getting in the way. Though he had altered the original story already, it still stood between him and the complete freedom to experiment and explore. He was worried, not unnaturally, about Goliath, who could hardly be left out, but would provide some very awkward problems if he were to appear. At this stage he was on the whole in favour of letting him appear and somehow suggesting that an ordinary actor was ten feet high. But he wasn't happy about this. He could see his Saul now, and even more clearly he was beginning to see his own special interpretation of Jonathan. But it was Goliath who was developing into an almost insuperable obstruction in his path.

By the end of March he was completely stuck. He was in despair. He saw no way out of his difficulties. And yet he knew that he was Barrie, and could finish anything if he went on fighting—as this time he had got to fight—and wrestled until victory was won. So



he made flank attacks on Goliath by adding more scenes for David and Jonathan, and for David and Saul. The second act was in chaos, and his nerves were again feeling the strain. But he was writing once more; and once more there were moments of hope and even of confidence when the pen had delivered some particularly shrewd blow. Yet it was all taking far longer than he had meant. He was impatient. He felt that he was being interrupted, even by the ordinary activities of his ordinary life. No doubt there was more haste and less speed at times. But he couldn't help this. There was such tremendous importance to him in this urgent, and absorbing, and exhausting task.

All of it still centring round Miss Bergner, who had inspired it at the outset, and whose share in its production was always the ultimate goal. Yet as he toiled away, and struggled and compromised, and still, as he fitted the scenes together, kept this one main end in view, he was now also thinking of other possible members of the cast. So long since he had been a regular playgoer that many of the new names were nothing more; but in any case his mind turned naturally towards some of the old ones. It struck him that Gerald du Maurier, who in these last years had become a wandering rather than a fixed star, might well play the part of Saul. A touch of the Irving tradition was needed here; an actor who could be haunted. And Gerald had always had this talent in reserve. To others it might have seemed too late now, for the restlessness and recklessness were ominously in the ascendant, as all his best and worst friends knew. But Barrie was still thinking of Wyndham's and Will Dearth, or even of the Duke of York's and Captain Hook. He was reaching towards the past again. And then, almost at the same moment, this part of the past had gone.

On March 26th Gerald, incredible as it seemed, was sixty-one. But indeed there was more than enough to haunt him now. For years he had known of the odds against him, and that his brother, killed in battle, had found an easier ending than the three sisters who had all died from the same merciless disease. He had known what this pain meant from the first, and had laughed—the short, bitter laugh that always mocked at its own mirth now—and gone on being restless and reckless as long as he could. But now he was giving the surgeons just one chance. It was announced that he had entered a nursing-home. It was announced that there had been an operation. It was announced that it was successful. But Gerald

knew better, and no one was going to make him live any longer now. On April 11th the last effort of his will prevailed. Death of Sir Gerald du Maurier. Obituaries, tributes, a thousand memories in the theatre, and in the Garrick Club, and among his countless friends. The end of an extraordinarily individual chapter; of a player who had taken almost as much pains to hide his gifts as to reveal them, who thought the stage a silly sort of place, who had given it his heart, who had won and thrown away its biggest prizes, and was proud but had never known conceit. Thirty-three years since he had first acted for J. M. Barrie, with his sister Sylvia, in the drawing-room at Gloucester Road. Up to the heights since then, and some of the way down again. But it was all over now; and Sir James Barrie must seek for another Saul.

His play was moving, though. Though he still hadn't vanquished Goliath himself, the second act was nearing its final shape, and by the end of April he had hit on a method of dealing with the third. Back to the Bible, and to more of the real story, without which these scenes of David's boyhood could never be complete. A dream was to be the solution, or a series of dreams. Thus Miss Bergner could see the future while still, as was physically essential, remaining a child. So there were to be visions in this last act, and this having been settled, he felt distinctly nearer the end. A sense of victory, after those weeks in the dramatic doldrums. He hadn't finished yet, but he knew now that he could. He was feeling and looking better again. And here, with the spring, came another Australian Test Team, captained again by W. M. Woodfull, and containing a number of old friends. The terrible and almost fatal affair of the "body-line" controversy, which had shaken the Empire two years ago, seemed to have been smoothed over; but it had been so acute at the time that as this boat-load of heroes neared England, they were still a little anxious as to what their reception might be. Barrie, however, as minister without portfolio, was one of the first to calm their fears, and one of their first engagements on arrival was a highly successful evening at the flat. There were so many of them that several had to sit on the floor, but he entertained them tirelessly and irresistibly, telling them his stories until long after they all ought to have been in bed. This, it was agreed afterwards, was the best time of all. They immediately set forth, played thirty-four matches, regained the Ashes, and in the whole course of their visit met with only one defeat. Advance, Australia. And always a

happier summer, when these great games were on and the sporting journalists were letting themselves go, for their still devoted student J. M. B.

On May 9th he celebrated his seventy-fourth birthday by a dinner with Cynthia at the Ritz. Still happy; still forging ahead with the new play; and still talking of very little else. Much of the last two acts was still fluid, and would remain subject to revision to the very end. But he had found fresh inspiration now in the friendship of David and Jonathan, or between the two little boys whom he was drawing in his own way. Less of the Bible now, and far more of himself and Kirriemuir. Of himself, nearly seventy years ago, and James Robb. This had become the ideal boys' friendship, as he mused and wrote, and was rapidly becoming his favourite part of the play. Again he remembered their special, secret whistle, of which Robb had reminded him on that walk together—six years ago now—in Caddam Wood; and this must certainly be incorporated, too. So it was; and for a short time, indeed, the play itself was to have been called "The Whistle," as he left the first act far behind, and wandered away into these thoughts and memories of his own.

Now, also, though still complaining of interruptions, he felt sure enough of reaching the end to turn aside, for a day or two, and prepare another speech. A week before its delivery he had one of his feverish attacks. But though it was sharp and alarming, it was the first for many months. There was more strength to resist it, and on May 31st he was able to keep his promise to the Surrey County Cricket Club, and to attend a dinner at the Carpenters' Hall in honour of the Australian team. The last full-dress speech but one. In praise of cricket, and in praise—with the usual jokes and personal remarks—of the guests of the evening. Very fully reported, even at the expense of Woodfull and the Archbishop of Canterbury. This, perhaps, was the real end of the "body-line" crisis, which nobody mentioned, and if other shadows were still approaching, "Sir James Barrie on Cricket" was still a headline that gave an illusion of security and of time as a friend. If it were a Test Match year, of course there would be a speech like this. It was the tradition by now. It was unthinkable, on such an occasion, that it should ever be broken; even though there must be three more summers before the next contests in this country, and Sir James Barrie was now seventy-four.

On the Saturday after this public appearance he went down to

Stanway, with Cynthia, for the week-end. It was on the Sunday, or June 3rd, that his friend of more than a generation, Fred Oliver, died. Four years younger than Barrie, he had gradually become one of the closest and nearest of all. The memories went back to the days of Kensington Park Gardens, and ever since then the bonds had become stronger, year by year. Now there was only a hostess at Edgerston, and Barrie would write to her, and see her in London, and retain an affection and admiration for her which had always been just as strong. But he had paid her his last visit as a guest seven months ago. No more Edgerston or Jedburgh in the rest of the story now.

Back to London. A version of the play had gone to the typists. He thought of it as "David," but as no one must yet have even this clue to its subject—and later because it would seem that some virtue would escape if its final title were known—the typescripts were given provisional names. Their covers would bear the words "The Two Farmers" or "The Two Shepherds." But Barrie would explain to those who were admitted as far as this—for presently he would be reading shorter or longer passages to a few favoured friends—that the real name was still up his sleeve. There is no record of anyone asking him what it was. Whether he knew or not, it was quite clear that he attached almost superstitious importance to this part of the secret. You were to feel, for some reason, that he was guarding far more than the title of a three-act play.

Almost immediately after that Stanway visit it was Cynthia's turn to be taken seriously ill. She was in bed for six weeks, with nurses in attendance, while Barrie called, hovered, telephoned, tried to decide who else, if anyone, might be allowed to see her, and continued to discuss his play. Her first sight of the completed version was through the mists of a high temperature, but if he needed appreciation, he must have it. They both understood that. Further appreciation from Miss Bergner, who knew now that she was blessed among actresses, and even if she hadn't got what she had expected, was quite clever enough to value what she had got. If faith were needed—and it must have been when she suddenly realised what a strange play she had evoked, and how its perils and opportunities were almost equally great—this faith was forthcoming, with no qualification that it was possible to detect. So Barrie was again borne up and reassured, and on June 18th the following announcement was allowed to appear in *The Times*.

## BARRIE PLAY FOR MISS BERGNER

PRODUCTION IN LONDON NEXT YEAR

Sir James Barrie is writing a three-act play for Miss Elisabeth Bergner for production in London early next year.

Miss Bergner has discussed the matter with Sir James Barrie and has even offered to overcome the language difficulty if it should be found necessary for her to speak Scots. The draft of the play, however, provides her with an English-speaking part.

This production will follow the forthcoming American visit of Miss Bergner in *Escape Me Never*, at present running at the Apollo Theatre.

This bulletin, it will be observed, combines caution, mystification, a touch of parody, and some very business-like advertisement. The facts, as we know, were that the play was already well beyond the stage suggested, and that Miss Bergner—who was immediately besieged by interviewers, but would disclose nothing—can never for one moment have imagined that she would have to speak either Scots or Scotch. But it was quite true that she had arranged to appear in her present part in America, when the London run had finished; and as this was now in its last weeks—though it had closed already once owing to the star's illness—it certainly looked as though she might be back again early in 1935. As a matter of fact, she wasn't. The eternal instability of all theatrical plans would find her filming in England in the autumn, and her American visit postponed until January. But meanwhile the Barrie play had gone to the obvious manager, and of course there was no more doubt that this would be C. B. Cochran than that C. B. Cochran would hang on to it with all his might.

A very great force in the theatre, and indeed in the whole world of entertainment, was this remarkable man. Like Frohman he had been bitten by the stage in his boyhood, like Frohman he had hurled himself into any and every activity concerned with it, like Frohman again he had built up a vast business, on a similarly fantastic financial basis, and for twenty years now he had been presenting failures and successes at an average rate of something like one every two months. But unlike Frohman, he had also experimented, as a manager, with a dozen other forms of amusement, he had led rather than followed

public taste, no one could possibly call him shy, and he was a far more cultivated character in every way. Though it was Cochran who had brought Hackenschmidt, Houdini, and the Rodeo to this country, it was also Cochran who had imported *The Miracle* and the Guitrys. His revues and musical shows had nearly always contained a distinct streak of virtuosity. He had written two volumes of autobiography which were about as good as anything in this line has yet been. He was an enthusiast. He had crashed into a bankruptcy about ten years ago, and had nearly died at the same time. But he had risen again, with all his old qualities as vigorous and irrepressible as ever, and now, in 1934, he was still the most agile adversary that stagnation in the theatre possessed.

One of the facets of his enthusiasm—and here there is another resemblance to Frohman, in a way—was that he could become distinctly intoxicated by the glamour of his own stars. At this moment, for instance, his admiration for Miss Bergner was still quite as overwhelming as Barrie's. As a showman, he knew that the conjunction of these two names would be an enormous public attraction; but as soon as he read it, he was also tremendously impressed by the beauty and poetry of the play itself. Its strangeness was the last thing to disturb him. He had an eye for its qualities that went far beyond the box-office. But at the same time his enthusiasm had caused him to back and to secure backing for far less promising propositions than this. Any manager—and more than ever in these days—must be a gambler; but it seemed to C. B. Cochran, in the month of July, that he had been handed something considerably more than the even chance of an historical success. And he was no hedger. Here, at any rate, was Barrie's completely individual treatment of an utterly unexpected theme; there was Miss Bergner apparently as anxious to star in it as he was eager to put her in another play. So up rose all the enthusiasm again. The author was informed of it. He could now, as it seemed, safely exhibit some of his old detachment and calm. But that was on the surface. Beneath it he still knew well enough how nearly he had been beaten, how different were these three acts from that first, golden glimpse, and the perils besetting any playwright of his age and standing who, with the exception of revivals and one unfinished fragment, had kept out of the theatre for fourteen years.

Yet there was assurance, too. If the pen, in the end, had followed its own path, it had done this before, and one certainly couldn't say

that it hadn't frequently known best. He was still Barrie. There could be no question of this, as he read and re-read what he had written. Mysteriously he had again put himself into this story, and if he couldn't trust himself by now, then his life and career were at least witnesses that there was no better guide. He was still interested and absorbed in what he had done. Sometimes, indeed, he felt that he could go on revising and polishing for months and months on end. Then came a fit of impatience again. He wanted to start rehearsing at once, to hear Miss Bergner speaking his lines, and to see his whole creation coming to life on the stage. But already he knew that he must wait the best part of a year.

Meanwhile, not a syllable about his subject must be allowed to reach the public. This was absolutely essential. Even Cochran was made to realise that a single unguarded statement would put him beyond the pale. He trembled a little. He was also fully aware that this was a very sound method, up to a point, of helping to achieve his own ends. Yet Frohman, or Frederick Harrison, or Gerald du Maurier could have told him that there had never been quite so desperate an insistence on secrecy in the past.

Meanwhile, also, at the beginning of August, Cynthia's long illness was at last coming to an end. Presently she was moved down to Peacehaven, for the first period of convalescence, and Barrie, with no summer holiday plans of his own, again stayed at Brighton within easy reach. There was talk of the next stage; of some kind of sea-voyage; and Barrie, who had always regarded even the illness as partly his own property, decided to share in this too. It was heroic, for he hated the sea, dreaded the ship-board life, and hadn't the slightest wish to go sight-seeing in this sort of way, whatever the sights might be. Nevertheless, he had made up his mind. Almost at the last moment his temperature rose in protest; but it fell, or he forced it down; and at the end of the first week in September he embarked, with the four Asquiths as the other main members of the party, for a nineteen-day Mediterranean cruise on the *Arandora Star*.

To his pleasure and surprise—for he had been convinced that he was going to be sea-sick the whole time, and there was considerable prostration among other travellers in the Bay of Biscay—he never, in fact, experienced a single physical qualm. To his surprise, but not, it must be admitted, entirely to his pleasure, he also discovered that he needn't have troubled to keep his name out of the passenger-

list; for no one, outside his own little party, seemed either to know or care who he was. Rather flat. Flatter still, when his secretary was asked for her autograph, and nobody provided him with an opportunity for refusing his own. He had kept away from the first of the organised social evenings, but now, if this were the way things were going, the time seemed to have come to unbend. So he unbent—just a little ruefully and self-consciously at first—and in a few days was speaking to everyone on board, and even slapping some of them on the back. In other words, he was enjoying himself, after all. At Algiers his secretary stayed on board with a headache, but Barrie went driving happily round the town. Then to Tripoli, Naples, and Monte Carlo; and so—by this time as the life and soul of the whole vessel—back to Southampton a few days before the end of the month. At the final leave-taking party he was observed to be wearing a paper cap out of a cracker, and to be blowing a small trumpet as gaily as anyone on board. The cruise hadn't only assisted Cynthia's convalescence, but seemed to have done Barrie a great deal of good as well. His cough had become considerably less shattering and persistent, and though, of course, there had been moments of boredom or mockery, the efficiency of the whole organisation had impressed him enormously; indeed, he was almost as sorry to be home again as he had been reluctant to set out. The reward, undoubtedly, of virtue. Of generosity, unselfishness, and an adaptability whose existence he would still probably have denied. But of course he would have done far more than this to please or help Cynthia. Her companionship and a share in all she did were still as necessary and important to him as anything else in life.

Another short visit to Mells in October, and then up to the Irvines' at St. Andrews, where General Smuts, his latest successor, was delivering the Rectorial Address. Ill again, but not seriously, on his return to London. Up and about after a few days, and once more working on his play. Some visits to Elstree, where Miss Bergner was now acting in a film-version of the still obstructive *Escape Me Never*. Barrie distinctly fascinated by the mechanism and ingenuity of it all, and treated, of course, with great honour by everyone concerned. In the middle of November Cochran also returned to London, after a visit to America, and was daring enough to lift a corner of the veil from what he described as the most important event of his career. He admitted that he was looking for



a boy actor; Jonathan, of course, though he still kept this secret to himself. He also announced that the mysterious, unnamed drama would have its first production in the following September, and that at the author's request—though it was the star, as a matter of fact, who had asked for a preliminary try-out—this would take place in Edinburgh. He indicated that nothing less than this long interval could possibly do justice to the amount of preparation that would be required. He didn't say, however, that he had just arranged with the New York Theatre Guild for a joint stage-production of *Escape Me Never*. But he admitted that Miss Bergner would be occupied during the summer months in another film.

Delay. Inevitable, perhaps, and fully covered by contracts and agreements. But inevitably unwelcome for all that. More outward philosophy. No hint from Barrie that one year was any different from another, or that his star mustn't arrange all her engagements entirely so as to suit herself. But ten months was a long time, and this slow approach must be a growing source of strain. One word to Frohman, in the old days, would have settled the whole affair. But Frohman had been dead nearly twenty years now, and the Barrie who had survived him was very much the victim of his own special form of pride. He still believed in hard work, but everything else must come or appear to come to him of its own accord. He must be seen as one thrusting the burden of success aside. There might be one kind of monosyllable when he got what he wanted, and another when he didn't; but the theatre was the very last place where he would ask for what wasn't offered. So he said little or nothing, and tried to show even less. Yet sometimes it would take a good deal of smoking and walking up and down to preserve the necessary calm.

On November 28th Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, who had been an actor, an author of farces, an immense influence as a serious playwright, and finally had been overtaken where once he had led the way, died in his eightieth year. Since 1916 he had been permanent President of the Dramatists' Club, and in the second week of December a special general meeting was called to elect his successor. There could only be one choice. Sir James Barrie, Bart., O.M. A private honour, but a tribute from his younger colleagues that was valued at its true worth; for the dramatists were a part of the theatre that he could never even pretend to despise. Now he was their acknowledged leader, and with a future, as it seemed, as well as a

past. Renewed if fainter signs of liveliness as a playwright of the present. Last February Miss Barrymore had appeared at the Palladium—though she had also vanished rather abruptly—in *The Twelve-Pound Look*. In October the little Embassy Theatre at Swiss Cottage had revived *Dear Brutus*. In December the film critics were shown how Hollywood had treated *What Every Woman Knows*; and already its trumpeters were heralding Miss Katherine Hepburn in a version of *The Little Minister*. Never must one forget the faithful amateurs, all over the world, nor the professionals who were still playing Barrie, in their own language, from China to Peru. And here, still at the Palladium, was the thirtieth annual revival of *Peter Pan*, with Miss Pamela Stanley as Wendy, and all the old shrieks of joy and terror from the front of the house. One couldn't possibly say that these dramatists had chosen a President no longer closely and widely connected with the stage.

Once more he joined the Stanway party for Christmas, bringing little Dick Rowe along with him from the flat, where he had been staying, and Lady Wemyss was now invited to read the new play. But there was a blow on Boxing Day, when the news reached him that, in spite of all precautions, its theme had somehow leaked out. His wrath was at once majestic and pathetic. It was exactly as if his shrine had been profaned. Yet those who sought to soothe and sympathise—and no one could dream of doing anything else—might still feel, when away from the presence, that this was only an answer to a challenge that he had issued himself. And that it would have been a pretty poor compliment if no one had taken it up.

On January 1st, 1935, Nicholas Davies joined Peter as a partner in his publishing business, which was a pleasure not only to both brothers, but to Barrie, who had always followed its fortunes with such close interest, as well. But in other matters he was becoming rather rattled again. Cochran and Miss Bergner had both gone off to America, and though he had known they were going, this somehow seemed to emphasise the delay. There were new misgivings about the David play itself, which were temporarily increased when he read it to his sister—who was staying with him again—and suddenly noticed that she had fallen asleep. He forgave her, for there was never anything that he couldn't forgive her; but he knew sometimes that there was a basic weakness in the whole thing. That the Bible story which had at first seemed to provide him with a ready-

made plot, had, in fact, become something of a millstone round his imaginative neck. That the best parts of the play had little or nothing to do with it, but that there was no chance now of escaping and starting again. Doubts. Moments of hope and reassurance. And then more doubts, and a feeling that he had been caught in some kind of trap. This, and the wintry weather, were making him cough again. He was sleeping badly. He had another of his feverish colds. At the beginning of February it was announced that the London County Council had definitely authorised the destruction and rebuilding of the Adelphi estate; and though the west side of Robert Street was still excepted, and the lease of the flat had still nearly three years to run, there would be noise and dust—as indeed there were—and the whole prospect was no kind of help to his nerves.

At the annual meeting—also early in February—of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, the cough seized him so badly that he had to slip out and come back to bed. It was all ups and downs for the rest of the month, though the spirit was still strong enough to produce some remarkable rallies. In one of them he had agreed to make the principal speech at a luncheon which was being organised by the *Daily Telegraph* as a preliminary to the special matinée, which it was also organising, in honour of Miss Marie Tempest's stage jubilee. And there was another successful week-end at Stanway in the second half of the month.

The luncheon, which was attended by a large gathering of theatrical celebrities, took place at the Savoy Hotel on March 5th, with Lord Camrose in the Chair. Barrie proposed the heroine's health in his most individual manner, which is to say that he spoke about himself a good deal, but also contrived to pay richer compliments, even to the object of this address, than anyone else could have devised. There was a queer combination of both qualities when he boldly transferred to Miss Tempest an anecdote which he had more accurately associated with Miss Irene Vanbrugh in the pages of *The Greenwood Hat*. But then no one at the luncheon had read *The Greenwood Hat*, and it was Barrie's own anecdote, anyhow. "(Laughter)," wrote the reporters again, and presently "(Loud applause.)" Barrie, who had taken great pains—as always when he was being funny—to speak without a trace of facial expression, returned to the flat in high spirits, which hung about for several days. He had made another success, and he knew it. Subtly, and

yet quite straightforwardly, there was a marked return of confidence and interest in his play.

For its sake, and in search of a Saul, he was now leaving his fire-side, again and again, to see some of the new or rising actors of whom he had heard. Or to see how some of the old ones had developed since his regular theatre-going days. It was taken for granted on these outings that there could be very little interest in the rest of the entertainment; and yet, to a playwright with Barrie's memories, the London stage of 1935 must often and in any case have seemed in a pretty feeble state of health. No settled policy anywhere now. Each theatre leading a hand-to-mouth existence under the vast shadow of the film industry. Stars created by a burst of publicity overnight, and then cast into outer darkness at the end of a month's run. Players, both men and women, who hadn't even learnt how to make themselves heard. A different attitude, even amongst the audiences, to the whole game of make-believe; as though with the disappearance of the old orchestras, and the introduction of the new circle-front lighting, some element of illusion had passed beyond recall.

This also was true, in a way. That Barrie himself, as much as anyone, had released this modern generation of playwrights from the old conventions and rules. And that it was Gerald du Maurier, his own special interpreter, who had lured the modern generation of actors into the belief—which he had never for a moment held—that nature was a better professional guide than art. These are no implications that the London stage was either dead or dying; but most positively—and like the rest of the world—it was in a state of transition and considerable confusion. To Barrie, whose era had begun with Irving and Toole, some of the plays and acting that he saw now must have seemed diluted almost to the point of complete transparency. Yet he was still prepared to give the authors, at any rate, more than the benefit of any doubt. As for the actors, it seemed, both naturally and with reason, that the older faces and voices were still the best. He had practically decided now that Godfrey Tearle, a Shakespearian almost from birth, as well as a once familiar figure at the Duke of York's, was the only possible choice for Saul. He would tell Cochran, and Cochran would engage him. For in this respect and at this moment there was no difference between Cochran and Frohman at all.

Easter at Stanway, with plenty of golf-croquet still, and in the

evenings shuffleboard or the revival of an ancient cunning at draughts. Now the third royal Jubilee in his lifetime was much in everyone's thoughts; but Barrie was no longer a journalist who might turn it into a couple of guineas, or a cricketer to whom flags and processions were of less importance than laughter among his own friends at a Broadway match. As President of the Society of Authors he had arranged that its Council should mark this occasion by presenting His Majesty with sets of their own works. And as Sir James Barrie, Bart., O.M., he attended the Jubilee Service, on May 6th, at St. Paul's. Full of loyalty and devotion; but unfortunately he was held up in the crowd afterwards, was unable to find his hired car, and had to walk back—perhaps you remember the royal weather that day—in the heavy overcoat which he had donned as protection against a possible ecclesiastical chill. In a mixture of indignation and exhaustion he retired to bed, though a lunch-party was waiting to hear his account of the ceremony; and after this he was just a little soured about the Silver Jubilee, in his own particular, and typical, and consciously exaggerated way.

But by the next morning he was otherwise none the worse. And a couple of nights later he once more entertained his secretary, on his seventy-fifth birthday, to dinner at the Ritz. She had a little task for him now. She had been commissioned to edit another miscellany, a volume this time to be sold in aid of The Princess Elizabeth of York Hospital for Children, and wanted Barrie to contribute to it, too. So he wrote again about his own hospital at Bettancourt—a story that drew a little more from his imagination every time he told it—and this, the first item in *The Princess Elizabeth Gift-Book*, published in the following October, would in the end be all that his public would have from him this year.

He didn't know it yet. It was still understood that his play would be produced in the early autumn. But in fact he was still only in the first stages of the fatal postponements that were yet to come. In the middle of May he set off, accompanied by Frank Thurston, to meet Miss Bergner and her husband in Venice, and then to go on with them, for a week or ten days, to Cortina, in the Dolomites. The journey was successfully completed, and on arrival the interesting discovery was made that Thurston, that remarkable courier, already knew far more about Venice from his reading than most people who had visited it in the flesh. But there was another discovery that was considerably less welcome. Miss Bergner, it seemed,

was now paying for her big personal success in New York by a bad attack of nervous fatigue. In addition to this her father had just died, in Vienna, and altogether it was quite clear that she was in no state to make any definite plans for appearing as David at all. Barrie found himself giving out sympathy at the expense of his own nerves. The trip, which was to have been a holiday full of discussions about the play, turned into attendance on a rather remote star, whose husband—though there was friendship here, too—could hardly be said to take her place. At Cortina it was still snowing on the snow-clad rocks, or if it didn't snow, it rained. Perhaps there had been too much anticipation about this romantic visit, but Barrie felt very far from home now, and there was far too much time when he didn't quite know what to do. No slackening in his admiration for Miss Bergner. How could there be, when she was ill like this, and when he had always understood actresses and taken their side? No doubt this would be another experience on which he would look back with regretful rapture. But at the moment how could he help feeling that something was again going wrong with his luck?

He was back in London by the end of May, to find the news awaiting him that James Robb was dead. The revived friendship of the last six years hadn't, in Scotland at any rate, been based entirely on memories; but a large part of it had been symbolic, nevertheless. Robb had brought back the past. Robb, seen as Barrie must contrive so far as possible to see him, had closed the abhorrent gap. Robb, in his own old age, had helped and prompted Jonathan; yet only because he, too, had once been a little boy. So the grief now was still for vanished youth. And this, with Robb dead, was hardly further, perhaps, than it had been before.

Another short visit to Stanway at the beginning of June. Another change in the Government, as Barrie's friend Ramsay MacDonald handed back the premiership to his other friend Stanley Baldwin. And return to London of Dr. Paul Czinner, Miss Bergner's husband, with the announcement that his wife was now preparing to act in a film version of Shaw's *St. Joan*. When this was finished, he said, which couldn't be before the late autumn, she would make her reappearance on the London stage in Sir James Barrie's new play. Though all this was no news to the author—but as a matter of fact it was news to Shaw—and though it was quite impossible for him to allow any criticism of Miss Bergner's plans, to the general

public that reads such announcements there was a slight air of mystery here. Why, they wondered, when the production of the play had first been foreshadowed nearly a year ago, must this film still come before it? What could be happening behind the scenes? Inevitably, there were rumours. The kind of rumour which spread so much more swiftly and widely in these days, when everyone seemed to know somebody on the stage; and when the somebody on the stage must always have his or her derogatory explanation of every item of theatrical news. The great army of the Knockers—those inverted enthusiasts who have certainly always done their best to kill the thing they love—was beginning to stir itself, and to fasten on this fresh quarry. Success, particularly success that had originated in another era, was a standing challenge to it. So was any attempt—and here there was very definite provocation from both author and star—to evade the professional gossips or to withhold autographs from anyone provided with a small album and a fountain-pen. From some queer quarter, on or off the stage, a suggestion was beginning to spread that foreign actors and actresses—whatever they might have suffered in their own countries—had no right to come swarming into this land of the free. Prejudice didn't seem entirely to be confined to those who had driven them forth. Signs of the times, no doubt, and of the growing shadow. Yet the longer the production of the play was put off, the heavier all these handicaps were bound to be. Barrie himself, as a hermit and philosopher, was to a large extent mercifully unaware of this. But how mercifully in the long run? And how much mercy had Fate prepared for him in the further exhausting postponements that were still to come?

In the middle of June, while the Winters were staying with him, he was suddenly taken ill again. Once more it was something so like pneumonia that the only thing was to treat it in the same way. The Winters had to be turned out, Nurse Thomlinson was sent for, and Cynthia had to abandon her own holiday abroad. In a few days it seemed clear that the attack was going to be beaten off—though always now by the expenditure of more ultimate strength—and by the end of the month he was well enough to continue his convalescence at Worthing. Nurse Thomlinson still in attendance, and the loyal Freyberg joining them for a night or two. Barrie suddenly and astonishingly better; almost, for the moment, as if he had never been ill. He reappeared at Mells. And a week later

he went off in good spirits for a visit to Sir James and Lady Irvine, who were on holiday at Porlock. It was from here that he drove over one day to look at the house on Exmoor where Sylvia Davies had died; all but a quarter of a century ago. Did the years seem long or short to him? Both, one may imagine, as he thought of all that had happened since then, and as the clear, pitiful memories returned. But he had chosen to make this pilgrimage. And having made it, he could speak of some of the scenes that it recalled. The past came nearer for a moment. Perhaps the present was only a dream or an illusion, after all.

Back to London, and off again, at the beginning of August, on a second Mediterranean cruise. This time on the huge *Homeric*, with Cynthia, Beb, Simon, the Asquith nannie, and one of her nephews—specially invited by Barrie, on hearing of his mother's ill-health. Far less anxiety than last year about sea-sickness—which he was again spared—and about meeting the other passengers; though the size of the huge *Homeric* made it much easier, also, to keep out of their way. In the hot weather—and in the Mediterranean itself it was almost suffocatingly hot—it was possible to have meals on a quiet part of the deck. Barrie smoked, rested, watched the various games that were going on, and occasionally exhibited some of his own skill at quoits. Went ashore at Malta, where it was hotter than ever. Rose early in the morning, a couple of days later, and stood by the rail in his dressing-gown, for his first view of the Acropolis. The representative of modern Athens was completely overwhelmed, was moved to his deepest depths, and entirely forgot his prejudice against well-known sights. Again—still in appalling heat—he joined the party that went ashore, and continued to be thrilled by every detail until he was almost completely worn out. But he still spoke of them. For once he had had more than his money's worth, as the huge *Homeric* steamed steadily away.

Two days later, again, he disembarked at Naples, left the Asquiths, and joined Miss Bergner and Dr. Czinner on a motoring tour which eventually brought them back to Cortina. By this time, for various reasons, the plan for the *St. Joan* film had been dropped. But another was taking its place. Miss Bergner was to fill in the autumn, at the Elstree studios, by playing Rosalind—still and always under her husband's direction—in a screen version of *As You Like It*. No chance now of the David play being seen before the new year, but Barrie still accepted this as the only possible and practicable course.



Furthermore, he switched over a considerable part of his thoughts and interest to this other scenario and its treatment. Advised. Had Barric-ish ideas. Spoke of his own experience as a director, and would remain in the background—or sometimes in the foreground—all the time that the picture was being made. No sign of impatience, and partly because the weather was so much better, a much happier time altogether than he had had in May. Miss Bergner still very much his favourite and most fascinating star. Her plans, it was to be gathered, so much more important than his own. But of course they talked about the play as well, and as they did so he still saw ways of revising it. This would be going on, with further readings to those in the great secret, right through the autumn, too.

He was back at the flat by the last week in August, and still feeling cheerful and well. On September 12th he attended a dinner of London journalists, but had arranged in advance that it should be as a silent guest. Then Cynthia returned, after finishing her own holiday in Scotland, and once more there were evenings at the theatre in search of the ultimate Saul. For though Tearle, whether he knew it or not, was still leading the field, it was still also an inspiring game to look at other actors and feel how their fate was in his hands. This was what he had done with Frohman once; always it had been the best part of any entertainment; and now at last he was able to do it again.

On October 7th he presided over a dinner given by the Authors' Club, at their premises in Whitehall Court, in honour of Morley Roberts, who had turned from other kinds of adventure to pen and paper nearly fifty years ago. But again there was no real speech, for again—in the mood that would never change now—he had made this a condition of taking the Chair. Only at the end of the early evening did he rise and make one joke; ringing a bell that was to cut other speakers short in order to silence himself. Then he slipped away; down towards the Embankment, under the wide railway arch, up Villiers Street, and so round two corners to the lift that took him up to his flat. "I am still leading the quiet and solitary life," he wrote, in a letter of this autumn. The circle was still contracting, though one could still name a dozen or more of the faithful initiates and friends. But only a very, very few would ever receive a summons now. Sometimes it would seem, as he smoked and read by himself, that he was drifting almost willingly towards the deepest quiet and solitude of all.

And then the play would rouse him again, and he was away with fresh enthusiasm, and excitement, and hope. Or he was at Elstree, in its own forest of Arden, watching the technical treatment of another author's work. But the great secret wasn't really any longer a secret, and hardly could be when it had been passing from mouth to mouth for at least the best part of a year. There were final declarations by manager and star that nothing would induce them to reveal it. And then, in the last week of October, the theatrical correspondents could be held back no longer, and Miss Bergner's rôle was proclaimed in print. She was to be David, in the story of David and Goliath.

It struck some readers of the proclamation that if Barrie had searched the world for the most surprising part for so intensely feminine an exponent of pathos, he could scarcely have improved on this choice. They felt—but of course they were quite wrong—that he must deliberately have discarded a dozen characters such as Moira Loney or Cinderella before he had hit on anything so strange. It might be, of course, that there was some double form of surprise here; that Barrie's David would somehow be a totally different character after all; or that Miss Bergner wasn't actually proposing to depart so diametrically from her performance as Gemma Jones. Certainly there was enormous interest in all this—omitting always the large part of the population who never gave it a thought—and so far, from the management's point of view, whole columns of advertising space must have failed to achieve so much. At the moment, also, the timing seemed hopeful enough. The play, it was now announced, would have its Edinburgh opening early in February. Only a little more than three months to wait, then. Less might have been better; but taking all the remarkable names and circumstances into consideration, the risk of overstraining the public's patience might easily have been worse.

Moreover, it could be safely supplied now with further items to keep it on the alert. It still mustn't be told the title of the play; for this the author must still keep stubbornly up his sleeve. But it was told that Augustus John—R.A., for the first time, at this epoch in his career—had been commissioned to design the costumes and scenery; to which would presently be added the statement that Professor Ernst Stern (do you remember the second act of *Bitter Sweet*?) was taking a hand in them as well. Then it would be informed that William Walton, one of the most distinguished of

the younger British composers, was writing special music. And then some of the names of the company would be disclosed. Sir John Martin-Harvey—thirty-five years now since he had taken over H. B. Irving's part in *The Wedding Guest*—was cancelling arrangements for his next season's tour in order to join the cast. Godfrey Tearle had been engaged. Leon Quartermaine had been engaged. There was a point when Miss Nina Boucicault flitted in and out of the announcements as later did Miss Hilda Trevelyan. But in the end neither the first Peter nor the first Wendy would reappear as David's mother, and the part would go to Miss Jean Cadell, the first Mrs. Dowey, and the first Mrs. Otery in *Mary Rose*.

The script was still being altered and retyped in November—which would have been a poor month for its production, with another general election supplying the customarily devastating effect on all theatrical business. But by the time this was out of the way, and Baldwin and the National Government were back again with a considerably reduced majority, there was another serious, private anxiety in Barrie's life. His sister, Mrs. Winter, now in her seventy-third year, had developed alarming symptoms indicating what was almost certainly the final breakdown in her health. It was the same physical weakness which in the end had affected so many of the family, but the loss of memory which it produced and the general failure of the starved brain-cells made it doubly distressing to the one who had done so much for her, and for so long. Not only was she passing into this cloud where no sympathy could reach her, but always there was the secret terror, which no assurance could ever dispel, that it was bound to be his own turn next. Of course he did everything for her that could possibly be done. He arranged for her to be moved into the well-known Park Lane nursing-home, where Sir Douglas Shields would of course see that she had every possible attention and care. But it was a heavy shadow as the year drew to an end. He visited her constantly, and sometimes she seemed a little better, though sometimes Shields had to try and coach her beforehand, in the hope that she would recognise him when he came. But the darkest depression had taken hold of him, and at the moment he could make no real effort to beat it off. Lady Horner had asked him to Mells for Christmas, but as the time drew nearer he felt that he couldn't leave London. So that again he was alone with his canary in the flat, though again, also, Cynthia broke up her own Christmas holiday so as never to be away for more than

a few days. She arranged, in addition, for Nurse Thomlinson to come and stay with him for a while. On some of the nights she felt so anxious about him that she slept there herself.

In the middle of December there had been a further public announcement by Cochran to the effect that Sir James Barrie's new play would definitely be presented at the King's Theatre in Edinburgh on February 15th, for a preliminary fortnight's run. Also that the stalls for the first performance would cost a guinea. Also, a little later, that in spite of this challenge to a Scottish characteristic, there was already an enormous demand for seats. But though Barrie himself was better by the middle of January, and had at least persuaded himself that his sister's condition had improved, Miss Bergner now succumbed to a chill and sore throat. Moreover, she hadn't yet finished her film, which had already taken longer than was expected, largely owing to a technicians' strike. Further inevitable postponement, then, and re-shaping of all Cochran's plans. A week's suspense and indecision; and another announcement with another date. The play, which it was now admitted was "provisionally entitled 'The Two Shepherds,'" would be produced in Edinburgh on Saturday, March 14th, and would open in London, at His Majesty's Theatre, on Saturday, April 4th. Yet at the moment, so far as the general public was concerned, this news passed almost unnoticed. Bulletins were being issued from Sandringham, where the King was lying gravely ill. Everyone remembered his last illness, and how little strength—except in spirit—he had left with which to fight. They thought of the Silver Jubilee last summer; of the many and almost insupportable burdens that he had carried, before, during, and after what was still spoken of as the war; and of the manner in which his courage and simplicity and sense of duty had brought him, since the days of his accession, so very close to all his peoples' hearts.

Now he was dying. Another reign was ending. On the afternoon of January 20th it was announced that no hope remained, and on the same evening a new King and Emperor must take up what his father had laid down. For the first time in nearly a hundred years there was no longer a Prince of Wales. Some of the theatres didn't know—though they certainly should have—whether to play the National Anthem or not. A cold draught blew suddenly from somewhere. Even in the era of mockery and sophistication there was again a feeling of personal and irreplaceable loss. The next day

the new King flew to London by air, and so entered on his own short reign. History was still moving faster and faster, though still no one could tell whither, in January, 1936.

In this last week there had been other bulletins in the newspapers and broadcasts as well. From the Middlesex Hospital, which Rudyard Kipling had entered, shortly after his seventieth birthday, for an operation too serious to be carried out at his country home. And two days before the King's death he, also, ended his own journey. Comparatively speaking, there had been little output in the last quarter of a century, and something had frozen inside him since the loss, in that war that he had foretold and even seemed to welcome, of his only son. But still there was no greater name in letters, and the special position which he had held as a national and imperial writer made even the hour of his passing take on, as it were, a further and deeper significance. Once more there was to be a funeral ceremony in the Abbey, and Barrie was to be a pall-bearer; not only because of his own position, and the long link between two of Henley's young men, but because Kipling had followed him, fourteen years ago, as Rector of St. Andrews. Yet when the day came, a last-minute substitute had to be found. Barrie was in bed again, with another bronchial attack.

There was bad news, also, as his temperature still flickered, from Shields's nursing-home. In fact, it was quite clear now that Mrs. Winter could last very little longer; but no one liked to tell Barrie outright, and he exhausted himself by trying to get further opinions, and trying to convince himself that more—which was impossible—ought to be done. Then, because he was a little better himself, he believed that his sister was better. Miss Bergner had practically finished her film now, and the first rehearsal had been called for Monday, February 10th. Barrie's spirits rising rapidly, for at last this was the end of the interminable delay. And then, on the same Monday, another message from 17, Park Lane. His sister was dead.

No need to say what this meant to him after a lifetime—hardly a day less—of intensive devotion and care. Always, even when she had taken most and given least, or when she was quite obviously jarring and jangling his nerves, he had insisted on treating her—and, if possible, on having her treated—as a heroine and almost a saint. He had built up this special relationship, and had kept it going as the longest of all serial stories. Never had he allowed him-

self to distinguish between the part that was pure fiction and the part that was golden truth. Now it was over, after more than seventy years. Of all his own generation he was the only one left. Because of his age, and because of a kind of ultimate mercy, there was in fact less sorrow than he had braced himself to meet. But though he braced himself, he also, inevitably, employed his imagination to increase the weight of the blow. Indescribable processes battled together, and racked him, and turned him once more into an escapist who was at the same time hurling himself forward into the emotional fray. Perhaps you can guess an almost immediate physical result. He caught another bad cold, the doctor was sent for, and forbade him to leave the flat. So Cynthia, and Peter Davies, and Jack and Gerrie, and Nico, all went down to his sister's funeral in Hampshire. But Barrie, whose play had now been in rehearsal for nearly a week, stayed alone in the Adelphi, facing his own thoughts.

And then? He had vanquished them, or they had retreated, or the time had come for others to take their place. By the week-end he appeared to be merely a playwright in a state of absorbed impatience because a doctor wouldn't let him get on with his work. But on the Tuesday—February 18th—he was released, hastened off to His Majesty's, and at last saw the company working on his first act. No doubt he was in a dangerously sensitive mood; no doubt also that Cochran's absence—for he had been ill and in a good deal of pain himself—had increased the general uncertainty and chaos. In any case Barrie's first glimpse of *The Boy David*—as we, at least, may surely be allowed to start calling it now—plunged him into the depths of disappointment and despair. Everything was wrong. The scenery—which had been painted and set up already—the actors, the producer, the entire method of treatment from beginning to end. He was in a cold frenzy—which of course instantly made everyone far more nervous and anxious that they had been before. The whole week, he felt, hadn't only been wasted, but had set everything going in the most dreadful and disastrous way. Even Miss Bergner—who was if possible the most nervous and anxious of the lot—fell momentarily under the black cloud of his displeasure. But he was miserable and distracted, too. He knew just what was wrong, but he was in no state of health or strength to engage in a stand-up fight. No Boucicault now, to bear the brunt, to shrug his shoulders, and then go right back on the stage and cancel his own instructions with a

voice of cold, thin steel. At the moment it was J. M. B. against everyone. And not only that; but against the sixteen years of change, and perhaps of development, in the theatre since the production of *Mary Rose*.

It is doubtful whether those first rehearsals of *The Boy David* ever recovered from the shock of that fatal Tuesday. It was recognised, of course, that somehow the show must go on; and as the author became less patently disgusted, the company and producer did all that they could to meet what they understood were his views. But they were shaken. Some of them were far from convinced that this mixture of Barrie and the Bible constituted a real play at all. There was a tendency to place immense and sometimes laboured emphasis on quite unimportant lines or bits of business; in the faint professional hope that this would somehow get things right. Miss Bergner, on the other hand, small, pale, and apparently tormented, was still reading her part from the script, and generally without any audible emphasis at all. It was gathered that she would never do more than this if anyone whose opinion she valued were watching her. But what was an author, and Barrie of all authors, expected to do then?

Cochran had engaged a large number of Israelites and Philistines—he had to, having taken a theatre of this size—and there were long hours of strain for everyone as they were slowly drilled into slightly less British movements. There was also a donkey, that didn't always show a complete sense of the stage. Now the scenery was being altered. Now the author was altering the play again. And now the leading lady was suggesting that it should be altered still more. To and fro, and up and down, went the various temperaments, not only in the theatre, but on the telephone as well. The neat, pink-cheeked, blue-eyed, and always slightly Corinthian Cochran—back once more on the quarter-deck—exuded patience and persuasion; for one can't become that kind of manager without acquiring almost superhuman qualities of faith and self-control. But he wasn't transparent, as Frohman had always been to Barrie. There was a growing friendship between them, but there wasn't and couldn't be the special feeling that comes from shared successes in the past. Another figure was missing as well as Boucicault. And yet if both had returned now, mightn't they have noticed changes in Barrie, too?

The spark was flickering. Sometimes it burnt so clearly that difficulties were demolished and the whole rehearsal too on a fresh

and startling life. Then it sank again. He was tired, worried, nervy, and seemed suddenly to have lost all confidence in his own play. These phases were reflected also; they were bound to be when there was still so much strength in the transmisson. But of course the production was moving forward, and gradually growing into something, all the time. Suddenly Miss Bergner had begun acting; quite exquisitely in her own way. Magic here, wherever it came from. Even if this were Gemma Jones again, it was still haunting, and moving, and an almost complete interpretation of the author's lines. Yet she, too, was still obviously feeling enormous tension and strain.

On February 27th—which was also one of the days when the rehearsal seemed to go backwards rather than forwards—the title of the play was at last announced, together with an intimation that all seats for the first night in London had been sold. On the next day everything took another sudden turn for the better; but Barrie, who had come down to the theatre feeling very unwell, was found to have a high and rising temperature on his return. Bed, doctor, and nurse. No other possible course, at any rate for the time being. The rehearsals must go on without him. He might even be away until the whole company and staff—more than a hundred of them altogether, with van-loads of scenery and baggage and practicable rocks—set off for Edinburgh and the final period of preparation at the beginning of the week after next.

The result of bed, doctor, and nurse, however, was that he was decidedly better by Monday, March 2nd. No chance, though, of going to the theatre yet. At all costs he must be taken care of, in view of the journey ahead of him and possible draughts in his hotel. On the same day Cochran released a further statement that the advance bookings for the Edinburgh fortnight amounted to seven thousand pounds. But on the same day, also, Miss Bergner left the rehearsal suffering considerable pain. At her home in Highgate it became rapidly worse. In the middle of the night she was moved to a nursing-home; there was a consultation between her own doctor and Lord Horder; they diagnosed acute appendicitis, and an operation was performed at once.

That was the news for Barrie in the morning, and for the unfortunate Cochran, too. The star's condition was so serious that it would be at least a month before she could be moved again, and a longer and at present quite unknown period before she could think



of returning to the stage. As for *The Boy David*, no one could conceivably take her place in it. It had been her own play and her own part from beginning to end. So Cochran must issue another announcement; that this time *The Boy David* had been indefinitely postponed. He must return all the money that had been taken at the two box-offices. He must give notice to the big company and special stage staff. And he must pay for the rehearsals, the dresses, the scenery, and a dozen other heavy items of theatrical overhead without any particular assurance that he would ever get a penny back.

He stood up to this with astonishing courage. He even remained neat, pink-cheeked, and blue-eyed, and made further announcements in due course of other ventures which C. B. Cochran would present. He didn't describe himself as a showman for nothing, and no disaster could ever quell a passion for this hazardous career. But it wasn't only that *The Boy David* must now set off again, if and when it did, with two production accounts. The Knockers were rising up. Ghoulishly they began saying that there was a curse on this play. And indeed, as the whispering and murmuring spread, already it was producing a barely distinguishable effect.

But the author said nothing. He turned away not only from the public, but from any possible admission of the shattering disappointment to himself. Miss Bergner's recovery was all that mattered; and indeed there was an anxious time at first. Then, as she was pronounced out of danger, and as his own health slightly improved, he was once more exhibiting that incomparable bedside manner. No sign of impatience. No question, for a moment, that the play couldn't easily wait; though of course, when she felt well enough, and had had a good rest, they would all start rehearsing again. It was the kindest and gentlest of stoic philosophers who visited her, and came away to show exactly the same steadfast composure to everyone else. The moods must still follow each other, but even in the blackest there was no reference to the injustice of fate. Whatever was hidden below the surface, there had never been a more heroic performance than this.

At the end of March there was another short feverish attack; another sign, of course, of the battle that had already gone further and more disastrously than any doctor had guessed. At Easter, in the second week of April, there was another visit to Stanway. Miss Bergner still improving, and Barrie now watching and advising on the cutting of her *As You Like It* film. May 9th. Seventy-sixth

birthday, and the usual little banquet with Cynthia at the Ritz. And then another sorrow, though it had been long foreseen. Ever since January the tenants of the doomed Adelphi Terrace, and of the rest of the block, had been slipping quietly away. A few, in the side and back streets, were still awaiting final eviction, but the beautiful terrace itself had been standing empty, gazing with mournful dignity over the upstart Embankment and the river, and what when Barrie first came to London had still been called the Surrey side. But now the housebreakers had arrived, and were preparing to demolish not only these gracious mansions but the labyrinth of brickwork arches on which they had been built. They didn't mean to waste time, either. They hacked and banged with pickaxes and drills; their lorries roared and grunted as they bore the débris away; they worked—until an injunction stopped them—by night as well as day; and presently, as the stout old buildings still resisted them, they attacked them by means of raising and then suddenly dropping a large iron ball.

It was an appalling sight, frequently an appalling sound, and as Barrie knew now, the plans for the new, huge block of offices on the site included an advanced frontage, which would eventually cut off his view down the river towards St. Paul's. He stood at his window hating it all; seeing the walls of Shaw's old flat laid bare; seeing the Savage Club being battered to pieces; and workmen destroying not only the quiet of his private sanctuary but the memories of twenty-seven years. He wouldn't move, though. He couldn't be bothered. He had become a fatalist in this matter, too. And yet every time the noise started, and every time he looked down at the growing desolation below, it was he whose mind and spirit were being buffeted as well. Sometimes, when the din died down of an evening, he drew his curtains, and could still pretend that all was as it had been in the past. But it wasn't. And as the uproar started again in the morning, always now there was less resilience in the fabric of his own strength.

From these scenes, however, he took his temporary departure at the end of May, when he spent a week with Miss Bergner and her husband at a cottage that they had taken in Sussex. Still no hurry about the play, of course. Still everything must wait on her complete recovery and her own plans. So nothing whatever was settled, because he couldn't and wouldn't insist that it should be. And then, still passive on the surface and with everything else hidden deep

down out of sight, he returned to hot, noisy London and the Adelphi.

Very hot indeed in the middle of June this year. That top floor, with its flat roof, became an oven when the sun shone down on it; and so often it was noticed that Barrie's breathing involved an effort in itself. Yet again no one could move him if he didn't choose to be moved. So he gasped, and looked worn and haggard, and still sat there—with one leg tucked under him—waiting for any slight suggestion of coolness that might come from the river at night. Or waiting for Thurston to come in and tell him what would-be visitor was on the telephone. Then he would appear to consider, but so often, again, the habit of loneliness was stronger than his need for its relief. "Sir James is sorry, but he's busy to-day." And perhaps another old friend wondered how much longer it was worth ringing up, hanging on to a receiver, and hearing the same remote reply.

At the end of June he went down to Stanway, where Lady Wemyss had arranged a Garden Fête for the two churches in this living. Naturally, in her hands, it was idiosyncratic. It included, for instance, a lecture by her brother-in-law, in the laundry, on Greece. It was in the laundry, also, on that very fine, warm afternoon, that J. M. B. made a speech to inaugurate the general proceedings. He rocked to and fro, with his hands in his pockets, while the strange, familiar tones were once more accompanied by utter absence of expression on his face. Then he wandered about the garden that he knew so well, alone, with his hostess, or talking to other friends. Once he was seen pushing a perambulator. A visitor moved to a point of vantage where he could see, perhaps, what child might be able to boast of this attention in after life. But the perambulator was empty. It had been empty all the time.

On the following Monday—June 29th—Cynthia was honoured by a visit, for tea at her house in Regent's Park, from her Royal Highness the Duchess of York and the two little Princesses. Barrie was one of the very few other guests, played up gloriously and valiantly, took a leading part in more games, and enjoyed what he knew was another success. But on the next day there was prompt and heavy reaction. A dark fit of despondency dragged him down again. He and everyone must wait until it chose to pass.

In July he again stayed with the Irvines, at a holiday house that they had taken in Dorset. Early in August there was another weekend, in the same county, at Mell's. On the day of his return he

attended a preliminary, private showing of the *As You Like It* film; but though it was nearly two months now since Cochran had announced that *The Boy David* would definitely be produced in the autumn, and possibly in September, there were still delay and suspense. Miss Bergner wanted to complete another film, which had been interrupted for *As You Like It*; and it was still she who must decide her own fitness for the strain of regular performances on the real stage. Barrie had hopes, but he wouldn't press her. By the middle of August theatrical correspondents were alluding to the probability of production in December. Yet even a month or six weeks later there was still very considerable uncertainty behind the scenes. Two and a half years now since it had all begun, and well over two years since the first version of the play had been finished and accepted. Could anyone have believed the almost fantastic story of obstruction, in advance?

Meanwhile, on August 17th, Barrie, with Cynthia, Beb, and Simon Asquith, left London for a holiday in Switzerland, which was to begin at Lucerne. Again, as on the first cruise, he spent the first few days in a state of rather anxious suspicion. Also he was distressed by the breathlessness, which made walks almost impossible, and became worse, even in a car or train, at any sort of height. And Lucerne held memories; not only of the first visit, with Joseph Thomson, in the summer of 1889.

But then, suddenly, the second phase on the *Arandora Star* was repeated as well. Again he began speaking to strangers, paying compliments to their wives and daughters, and turning—whether it were another performance or not—into the benevolent spirit of the hotel. He offered and personally presented the prizes for a ping-pong tournament. Instead of retiring to his room or to some quiet corner, he sat watching the dancers after dinner, with the most convincing appearance of pleasure. On the last night this affable effervescence actually provided an informal, light-hearted speech. The reaction that followed was only a brief and quite moderate affair.

On the next day—August 26th—the party moved on to another hotel at Grindelwald. It was even fuller of gaiety, with more dancing for Barrie to watch, and more ping-pong, in which he now took part as well. But he missed the lake, the paths seemed even more precipitous here, and there was the beginning of a powerful impatience to return. At moments he was still at the top of his

extravagant, holiday form. Then he plunged, and it was difficult indeed for the whole party not to plunge with him. It was all nearly over, though. A last drive; fortunately one of the ones that he managed or decided to enjoy. And so, at the beginning of September, back again to London. In the train, travelling homewards, there was a final and terrific outburst of liveliness; but this wasn't entirely due to the direction in which it was moving. For once more, touchingly and provokingly, he already seemed to have entirely forgotten everything that had annoyed or depressed him at the time. It had been a perfect holiday. The further it receded, the more perfect it became. And this, at least, would be his secretary's reward for the many hours of bolstering or failing to bolster up his spirits while it was all going on.

Still no date for the play. Miss Bergner is caught up in the mysterious world of Elstree. Cochran can decide nothing without her. A period—it lasts at least a fortnight, which at this stage doesn't seem any shorter—of thwarted and involved negotiations; still further complicated by factors that only in the theatre would be considered as having anything to do with them at all. Even Barrie showing signs of desperation, as the whole thing seems to be slipping out of all intelligible control.

But then, suddenly, the position changes and the way at last seems clear. Another and final announcement from Cochran, at the end of September, informs the public that rehearsals of *The Boy David* will start on October 18th; that the first performance will take place at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, on Saturday, November 21st; and that the play will be presented at His Majesty's Theatre, London, on Monday, December 14th. In the same paragraph it is disclosed that a new producer—Theodore Komisarjevsky, who directed *Escape Me Never*—has now been engaged. And this time—except that the rehearsals will actually begin a couple of days later—every word in the forecast is going to be fulfilled.

No one, of course, can yet swear to this. No one, perhaps, would really like to swear to anything after all that this play has gone through. It is still burdened not only by what it has cost already, but by an aura of persistent anxiety and doubt. Nevertheless, these arrangements have been made, almost every member of the original company has now been re-engaged, and the author, for the moment, is once more in his mellowest and most hopeful mood. Stoicism

can be suspended. His health improves again. And for nearly three weeks the strain relaxes and he is almost his old self.

Impossible, as may be imagined, to relax entirely, and during those three weeks there were bound to be several tightenings of the tether as well. But nothing really disastrous, or that still can't be repaired. And on October 20th—with more secrecy than ever now, for the company had been summoned to a rendezvous which no one was allowed to reveal—the rehearsals were at last resumed. A fresh attack was to be made under the new producer, with fresh treatment in a number of ways, but the text at the moment was still the same as before. Barrie and Cynthia sat watching by themselves every day, for Miss Bergner—whether she knew his old custom of bringing friends with him or not—would allow no one else past the door; but though he often seemed tired when he got back to the flat, he still appeared happy on the whole. A week of these remarkably furtive preparations, yet with some of the old difficulties obviously being overcome. But Barrie, it was now equally and increasingly obvious, was anything but at all well. His doctor came to see him on the Sunday, spoke of low blood-pressure, but didn't feel justified in ordering him to stay at home. On the following Thursday, however, he was again seized with pains in his back, and had to retire to bed. Lumbago? This was what it was called and what it had been called last time. But in fact it was already considerably more serious than that.

Cynthia summoned a night nurse, and now that he didn't have to stand up or walk about, the patient seemed better again. Less pain. He talked constantly about his play, he still seemed hopeful about it, but he also seemed curiously contented to stay where he was. If this were his choice, then the doctor would be the last to suggest anything else. The only interpretation now put on his symptoms was that he was old, and just gently and vaguely ill.

Then he decided to get up again. Attended some more rehearsals, which were again troubling and worrying him; and on Saturday, November 14th, felt well enough to go down with the Asquiths for another week-end with the Salisburys at Hatfield. But felt worse when he got there, and worse still on the Sunday evening, when he first had to lie down on a sofa, and then slipped off to bed. A bad night. A revival in the morning. Off, early and urgently, for the last rehearsal before they all travelled north.

This was the day that Miss Bergner strained a muscle while riding

on the donkey, and that Barrie, misconstruing an unofficial bulletin, leapt to the conclusion that his play must be postponed again. A bad scare, that caught him with a badly-weakened defence. No wonder the nurse discovered in the morning that his temperature had again gone up. Yet now it was the day for the journey to Scotland, and he seemed quite determined to start. No possible means, in that case, of stopping him. Perhaps it was only the remains of the scare last night.

So Barrie, and Miss Bergner, and Cochran, and the hundred members of the company and staff set off from King's Cross on the Tuesday with three clear days of rehearsals still to go. But they were only clear in that rather limited sense. The new stage, the number of warriors, the size and weight of the practicable rocks, Komisarjevsky's complicated lighting-plot, Miss Bergner's nerves, and the exhausted author's last-moment experiments and alterations—all these combined in the direction of something like chaos. It is possible that it seemed no worse to Cochran than the final stages of some of his spectacular revues. But even if Cochran lost, this time, he could still play again. For Barrie it was the last throw, with everything staked on it. He had returned to the arena from his hidden place of safety; but he had known for months that whether his skill had left him or not, his strength was just crumbling away. If he could have fought, he was still convinced that violent, authoritative methods might yet restore the vision that he had once seen. He wanted a success now, after the long delay and the covert sneering in the background, more, probably, than he had ever wanted it in his life. But his back was hurting him again. Even on the Friday he had known that he must miss the first performance. And on the Saturday there was nothing for it but to stay in bed.

Cynthia arrived from London that morning, and knew that it must be with more bad news. News that couldn't be kept back, either, for of course he mustn't wait to see it in *The Times* for himself. Gilmour had died on Thursday. His illness and suffering were ended at last. Gilmour, the friend of fifty-three years. Gilmour of Grenville Street. Gilmour the Allahakbarrie, the casher of cheques, the companion on house-boats, the bridegroom, the patient expert on income-tax, the fellow-traveller, the man who had known Barrie longer and better than all, and had still loved and admired him right to the very end. So now Barrie must bear this, too—the loss and the implicit reminder of his own age—in addition to pain

and illness, on the day that *The Boy David* was to face an audience at last.

He felt it very deeply. It was no conscious mechanism, as he lay there in bed at the Caledonian Hotel, that made him again seem smaller and more fragile than ever. Yet still the rest of the ordeal must go on. Letters and telegrams were now arriving in bushels; and though their absence would certainly have been a cold sort of omen, they could hardly be welcomed by a hermit who must still feel that every sign of public interest was also an intrusion on his privacy. But they kept on coming. Of course there was no stopping them. Any more than it was possible to advance or delay the passage of these last few, agonising hours.

Elsewhere in Edinburgh there was astonishing evidence of national pride and excitement. The play had been under discussion everywhere for weeks, and with reason indeed, when in addition to the sporting and romantic element of challenge, its author was their own illustrious compatriot and Chancellor of the University as well. The Knockers in Edinburgh were very, very few and far between. The ticket-holders for to-night's performance were almost unanimous in their wish for an overwhelming triumph. One could feel this long before the curtain rose, and no amount of bewilderment or of familiarity with the First Book of Samuel could affect the reception at the end. There were cheers, shouts, and thunders of applause. The curtain went up and down again and again. Presently David was forced on to the stage by Saul, and murmured a few words of thanks. But still the audience went on clapping and shouting, until the safety-curtain and house-lights finally broke this part of the spell. Yet they still swarmed outside the front of the theatre, and then outside the stage-door, and then reappeared, to cheer again, when Miss Bergner entered the hotel. Barrie, wide awake but still in bed, presided over a small, final gathering of supporters and eye-witnesses. He knew, and they knew, that the play still needed a great deal of alteration and attention. But at that midnight assembly in the Caledonian Hotel there was at least an echo from the King's Theatre of unquestionable and ungrudging encouragement.

It was largely on the strength of it, no doubt, that he seemed distinctly better on the Sunday morning, that his spirits also improved, and that he was well enough by the evening to get up and dine with his manager and star. Yet although the manager



most certainly knew his own business, though no one, obviously, can have been more anxious for success, and though, again, he had proved the preliminary try-out system by almost innumerable tests, it must still possess its own drawbacks as well as its own value and help. In the case of *The Boy David* there can be no suggestion that Cochran was treating Edinburgh as anything but the capital city that it was. Yet with the best will and all the keenness in the world, the mere fact that a second verdict is more important, and that changes and experiments are still possible, is bound to be somewhere in everyone's mind. Because this particular event was attracting such an enormous amount of attention, the London newspapers had naturally sent their representatives to report on the trial run. There was a convention, it is true, that their messages should be descriptive rather than critical, so that the real critics might still be supposed to await their own turn with a clear mind. Nevertheless, the tone of these half-cock notices in the London Press—for that was what they came to—was distinctly different from the sound that had filled the King's Theatre on Saturday night.

They didn't attempt to minimise its fervour or volume; but this, they indicated, must either be put down to Scotch loyalty and exuberance, or to the existence of a very much lower local standard for plays. They weren't really unfair. They didn't even mean to be unkind. They were merely telling their English readers—some three weeks before they could see it for themselves—that *The Boy David* was a queer play, with moments of great beauty and other moments that were undeniably less effective, if not, in fact, rather dull. But this was quite enough to start the rumours again in London, to send some of them speeding north, and to add to the inevitable reaction when they got there. Everyone connected or concerned with the production knew that drastic steps must be taken to pull it together and deal with its faults. No one was more acutely aware of this than the author. But on the Monday his pain grew worse again and spread to his legs. It was quite impossible for him to attend any rehearsal. A doctor suggested that he should be X-rayed, which was done, but failed to reveal any cause for the trouble. Kind Sir David Wilkie, the University Professor of Surgery and another native of Kirriemuir, called every day, and did as much as anyone to raise his spirits, but again could detect no injury or misplacement to account for the almost incessant pain. So now Barrie was either in bed, or being wrapped up and taken out

merely for massage and other slightly empirical treatment. The theatre was crowded every night, for again there had been colossal advance booking, but no one behind the scenes was confident or happy. They were all beginning to dread what might happen in London.

Whenever his pain allowed him, and sometimes even when he could hardly hold a pen, Barrie was revising, and cutting, and changing. But still he couldn't get to the theatre, and now it was decided to postpone all but trifling alterations until the end of the Edinburgh run. There was no other course, unless the responsibility were to be taken right out of the author's hands, and nobody, even if it were possible, could see anything but further risk and confusion in that. They must wait, and hope, and go on losing their nerve. And Barrie, baffled and angry, must still direct such operations as he could from his rooms in the hotel.

Friends appeared, from various quarters, saw the play, and came in to tell him what they had thought. It wasn't easy for them. It wouldn't have been easy if they had thought it the best play in the world, for he had never helped anyone to praise him, and he knew so well that none of them had seen what he had meant. The best visitor of this kind, quite certainly, was Harley Granville-Barker, who knew and loved the play already, who had penetrated at once to its special meaning, and was of course a complete expert in the theatre as well. If only he hadn't withdrawn from it. If only he could have returned, with all that skill and sympathy, and dealt with *The Boy David* in his own way. Yet if this had involved putting the play before the star, would Barrie ever have let him? One doesn't know. It didn't and perhaps couldn't happen in any case. He came to the hotel, he was appalled by Barrie's appearance and condition, he supplied him with further evidence of deep admiration and affection, and then he, like the others, must leave him and go on with his own activities elsewhere.

But Barrie's health was still no better. He was ill when Cynthia collapsed with influenza—part of the nightmare of that whole Edinburgh fortnight—and still ill when she had driven her own temperature down. He still hadn't seen either a performance or an extra rehearsal. He might just as well have stayed in the Adelphi, for all the good his own exhausting efforts had done.

On Thursday, December 3rd, when the play was in the last week of its trial run, another rumour or series of rumours, which had

been gathering weight for months on end, suddenly burst through the self-imposed discretion of the Press, and the whole country was at once in the thick of a serious constitutional crisis. As a private citizen with a keen eye for drama, Barrie discovered—as did hundreds and thousands of others—an immense stimulus in the History and Tragedy of Fort Belvedere. One might even say, quite simply and straightforwardly, that for the moment it was not only a help to his sense of proportion, but did him a great deal of good. As a playwright, however, with an important production still pending, he must also have been aware of something else. That big news, whether it is good, bad, or indifferent, is the worst enemy that the box-office has. No news is always the best news there, and in this period of crisis, when even the big shops were suddenly half-empty, any management might well wonder whether to go on or hold back. Here was yet another strange and ominous result of the long delay. Cochran, however, had now made a six-weeks' deal with the libraries—as the ticket-agents are professionally known—his first night was sold out at twenty-four shillings a stall, his second performance had already been dedicated to a well-sponsored charity, and he still knew that luck and courage are often the same thing. So there would be no postponement this time. He was still going to stand fast. Yet not only the whole of London, but the whole of Great Britain, was now completely obsessed by something else. If a soothsayer could have predicted these conditions in advance, no manager would have dreamt of presenting a play of such importance in the middle of December, 1936.

On Friday the fourth, Barrie left Edinburgh, still without once having entered the King's Theatre since the opening, and returned to the flat. He was well enough to travel, and well enough to see Cochran and Komisarjevsky on the next day, but as the last changes were now definitely to be made in London, there could be no point in delaying his return. He was only fairly well, though. A little worse on the Monday, though still hard at work at revision in bed. Worse again as the week went on. More pain and deeper depression at the maddening absence of any ascertainable cause. On the Thursday Mr. Baldwin announced in the House of Commons that the King had decided to abdicate. The theatres, sensitive as ever, were almost empty that night. The end of the crisis might be seen now, but still there must be days of bewilderment, and disorganisation of every kind of business, and of the one topic of interest that must

always come first. And *The Boy David* was to open at His Majesty's Theatre on the following Monday night.

With changes. With cuts. With still more Israelites and Philistines to fill the huge stage. But with no chance now of Barrie lurking in a box, for it was clear that he was quite unfit to leave the flat. No link but the telephone, during the three hours of ultimate suspense.

So now the stakes were on the table, and must remain there, yet surely facing more than the usual odds. For no reason that could be taken as anything but a compliment to the author and the occasion, Cochran had assumed a number of heavy risks. The mounting was on the grand scale. The salary list was alarmingly high. And though these and other expenses required a big auditorium, the play itself had made no such demand. There was no real need for spectacle, now that Goliath—who on the opening night in Edinburgh had been represented by a large, rigid effigy, but had since become merely an off-stage voice—was no longer a visual part of the show. In no other scene would the tiny star gain any advantage by appearing against a vast background. The whole treatment of the story was in terms of intimate appeal.

But of course it was much too late now to consider anything like that. Cochran had chosen the scale, Barrie had accepted it, and *The Boy David* was coming to His Majesty's Theatre—which Tree had built for himself as Her Majesty's Theatre, in the spring before *The Little Minister*, and had ruled with his own tradition for twenty extravagant years. Now, however, it had no real tradition at all. It had housed musical comedies, and revues, and even films. Its pit had been abolished, and so had the old roomy, comfortable seats in the stalls. Outside it was still strangely stern and respectable, for its lease still banned the use of electric signs. But inside it had become merely a large playhouse, capable of holding some thirteen hundred people, directed by a syndicate, and with no particular atmosphere at all. It was a machine for making money if money could be made. But it was a very costly machine. *The Boy David* had become an extremely costly production. And unless it now played to what they call capacity, or something very near it, the mere splendour of the presentation must almost ensure a loss.

Naturally it played to capacity on the opening night. Though the weather was wet and stormy, Cochran's threat to close the doors against late-comers had brought everyone there in time. A very smart audience, too. Lords, ladies, and celebrities. Cochran had a

flair for collecting them, and here they all were again. A little self-conscious, perhaps, for in these days they knew or at any rate believed that they were an important and essential part of the show. No willing victims of illusion. Sophisticates, too many of whom would always find a failure more titillating than a success: too many of whom had already accepted the depreciation which the author had been quietly undergoing for years. And precious few of whom, one might add—though the critics might choose, after their own recent researches, to assume otherwise—with more than the vaguest knowledge of the First Book of Samuel. There they all were, however, in their jewels and their best clothes, and, alas, with no cager, warm-blooded pit to stimulate or leaven their intelligence from behind. In fact, they constituted the quintessence of a fashionable West End audience of the period. But as the horrible, painful evening went on, it was clear enough that they were under no magic spell.

They behaved themselves. They welcomed Miss Bergner, and their other favourites, with outbursts of applause. They clapped whenever the curtain fell, and long enough at the end for it to be raised several times. Moreover, as they had been informed by the newspapers that the author wouldn't be present, there was obviously no reason why they should start shouting for him now. But then they just didn't shout at all. They got up, they continued to block the exits for a considerable time—for the weather was, if possible, worse than ever—and so, gradually, that audience vanished into the night. It hadn't killed the play stone-dead, and with all that advance and the six-week's library deal it was hardly in its power to do that. But indeed it had left a feeling of flatness behind it. Everyone still in the theatre knew already that only some kind of miracle could turn *The Boy David* into a big popular success. And suddenly even those with the highest hopes must realise that they had known this all along.

It had been Cynthia's duty to telephone to the author during the evening, and one may be quite sure that she was as loyal and encouraging as anyone could possibly be. Later she, and Cochran, and Miss Bergner went round to the flat, and spoke bravely, and with as much conviction as they could muster, of any omen that might prove their own judgment to be wrong. But the Press still hadn't spoken; and when it did, on the following morning and again in the afternoon, there was very little mercy in its tone. The gentler critics could still

pick out and praise the three best scenes—David's mixture of childish doubt and childish courage in the first act, David and Saul in the second act, and David and Jonathan at the end of the third; but even they complained of the vagueness of the visions, of dull moments with the minor characters, and above all of the choice of subject, and the distortion of a well-known legend by an author who in the past had originated legendary figures of his own. Why David, they wanted to know? Or if David, why Miss Elisabeth Bergner? The answer to both inquiries, as we are aware, was that three years ago Miss Bergner had made these suggestions herself. Her special qualities had touched a spring. Barrie, sick of productive inaction but with no new idea that he seemed able to bite on, had leapt at another impulse. It had been everything to be at work again, and never had he lost his enthusiasm for Miss Bergner's own art. But presently the work had become labour, the pen had had to be driven, and instead of a swift return to the theatre there had been delay, and delay, and delay. Time, perhaps, in which to wonder whether it had been the right impulse, after all. If one were Barrie, one still concentrated and struggled—and never had there been a longer, harder fight. Yet in the end he knew he was defending what those critics had questioned at once. A theme which he had chosen with too little premeditation, which he had illuminated—brilliantly at moments—with his still extraordinary gifts and insight, but which had also hampered him from beginning to end.

He wouldn't admit this. One couldn't expect him to admit it, in his position and at his age. He had backed his fancy, and would still stick to it through thick and thin. But there weren't only the kinder critics, trying to make allowances for what they couldn't understand. There were others who saw no reason to be kind at all. It was his own *Times*, even though it was cool rather than deliberately unkind, that dealt the hardest blow. No, of course he hadn't really expected special treatment. He wasn't an amateur, and he would have despised anyone who had pulled the slenderest string. Yet once there had been A. B. Walkley—dead ten years now—and then there had been his own letters and other communications, and its reports of his speeches, and his gift to it of *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan*; all proof that he was no stranger or outsider, but almost an honorary member of the staff. Yet on that dismal Tuesday morning it hadn't only been cool and a little condescending, but—by some editorial chance or design—had published descriptions of the

audience's dresses and hair-ornaments as though they were as important as the play. That *The Times*, of all newspapers, should have served him in this way. It was more than a blow. It was a wound from which there could be no recovery. It was a form of cruelty that he could never hope to forgive.

Deep, deep depression in the solitude of the flat. And pains, and sleeplessness, and the feeling—even if he could for a moment forget his play—that the doctors knew what was wrong with him, and wouldn't tell him because they were afraid. Yet still he was planning possible revisions. He suggested them to Miss Bergner, but in her own state of nervous disappointment she preferred, apparently, to run no further risks. The theatre wasn't empty. Already—though the author was as yet hardly in a mood to believe this—*The Boy David* was finding its own addicts and enthusiasts. Not very many of them, perhaps. Certainly not enough to upset the verdict of the Press. But the performance was pulling itself together, and there was often far more applause now than on that desperate, ice-bound first night. Perhaps the business would build up after Christmas. The week just before it was notoriously one of the worst in the year.

It was in this week, however, that Barrie was first able to see a performance himself. On Tuesday evening, December 22nd, he sat behind the curtain in a stage box, and watched the highly anxious company doing their utmost and best. It was more than two and a half years since he had last seen Miss Bergner in a real play, and in this, which he had written for her, she could still move him and he must still feel the extraordinary power of her spell. Nor was he unjust to the other players, wherever their own skill was fitted to their own parts. Yet he hated the whole evening. Too many memories of the long struggle. Too vast a gulf between his own conception and what in the end had been achieved. This was wrong, and that was wrong, and everything, it suddenly seemed, was being wrongly emphasised or misunderstood. Too late, though, to do anything more about it. It was out of his hands now, and he didn't particularly want to see it again. An old friend—no other than Mlle. Lydia Lopokova, who was now Mrs. J. M. Keynes—daringly twitched the curtain of the box, as she left her seat at the end of the performance. He smiled at her, and spoke to her, and they both remembered how he had once begun writing a play for her, too. Would it have been luckier than this play, or had they both escaped something then? No knowing. No telling. But there was no escape

this time, seventeen years later, and for *The Boy David* there could be no second chance. He paid her one of his affectionate compliments, and that was the last time they met. Back to the flat again, to think, and smoke, and worry about his health. Another lonely Christmas, all by himself, for Cynthia had now gone up to Scotland. On Boxing Day there was the usual revival, at the Palladium, of *Peter Pan*; the thirty-third season, with Charles Laughton as Captain Hook. But Barrie never even thought of struggling as far as that.

1937. Cynthia returned on January 2nd to find that the nurse, whom she had left in charge, had been taken ill herself and had gone, but that the patient was apparently a little better. Not well, though. Quite obviously not well. Again there was a visit from a specialist, who again overlooked or discounted the other evidence, and pronounced after examination that there was nothing wrong with the spine. No doubt diagnosis is much more complicated than one suspects, and that the patient's general condition made it no easier to decide which was the weakest spot. Yet it is true also that some who weren't doctors at all were already suspecting what in the end would at least be part of the truth. The main trouble was organic now, rather than muscular or neural. Or than psychological, or bronchial, though a complete analysis would have shown strain and weakness almost everywhere, except in the essential and still living spark that only the last assault could quench. Meanwhile, on the strength of this further negative report, Barrie decided to go down to Stanway. Two nights there, surrounded by care and kindness, but still feeling ill: on, by car, for another short visit to Mells; and so back to London by the middle of the month. No change here, either. Pains. Attempts, since no one could explain them, to cut down the doses of a harmless anodyne which he had been taking all these weeks. And the same pains as before.

There was little comfort from the present position at His Majesty's Theatre. The houses were still moderately full, but business had been dropping steadily week by week. It still hadn't reached the figure at which, under the terms of the author's agreement, the manager could give notice to terminate the run. But unfortunately there was a gap between this figure and the higher one which would cover his weekly expenses. It was he, of course, who had risked this gap. But there it was, and it was widening. Either, then, he must go on losing money until the lower figure was reached and passed,



or he must ask for this clause in the contract to be waived. On Saturday, January 23rd, the other arrangement by which the ticket-agents had agreed to buy so many seats for the first six weeks, whether they re-sold them or not, would come to an end. But as they hadn't re-sold them, it was quite obvious that they would make no further offer, and that if the run continued it must do so without their now essential guarantee. This, indeed, was so clear to the syndicate controlling the theatre—who had also provided a considerable part of the financial backing—that their one wish now was to cut their losses if they possibly could. They urged this opinion on Cochran—who in turn was now heavily committed to preparations for a large-scale revue—and his awkward but only practical course was to ask Barrie to let him close *The Boy David* at the end of the following week.

There was no reason, under the agreement, why Barrie should do anything of the sort. If he had chosen to be firm, he would of course have had the full support of Golding Bright—who had negotiated the contract—and the play would have had to go on. But he was ill, tired, and disillusioned about the whole thing. Even now, perhaps, there was a faint, cynical amusement at this final evidence of what the world of the theatre could do. But he didn't attempt to demand his pound of flesh. Cochran must settle whatever he thought best; and accordingly, on Thursday, January 21st, the company and the Press were informed that the play would be withdrawn on Saturday week.

Almost immediately there was a wild but belated rush to the box-office and all the agencies. By Tuesday every seat had been sold for the rest of the run, and could easily have been sold twice over. Quite suddenly the news that the play was ending had overcome all public hesitation—part of which, there can be a little doubt, had always been due to the sixteen-shilling stalls and the thirteen-and-sixpenny dress circle—people were tumbling over each other to try and get in, and every performance was received as though this were the King's Theatre in Edinburgh again. It might or mightn't have lasted. That's something that no one will ever be able to tell. But there certainly seemed to be good grounds now for announcing at least a modified reprieve.

Even the company were expecting this. The box-office telephones were still ringing incessantly, and the swing doors into the foyer were flapping all day. But the chance, unfortunately, had already

gone. The decision to close the production had been instantly followed by another decision to let the theatre to the management of a musical play. The musical play, which had actually had an equally rocky start at the Adelphi Theatre, would be transferred, and develop into an enormous success. The Adelphi would become available for Cochran's revue. But on Saturday, January 30th, 1937, *The Boy David* had its two, final, packed performances, and so reached the end of its short life.

Nobody spoke now of what had almost been taken for granted in the hopeful, distant past. Of a triumph in London being followed by a triumph in New York, as had happened so regularly with play after play. For that last glorious and galling week had, in fact, merely emphasised the disastrous length of the run. As Granville-Barker pointed out, in a letter to *The Times*, there was something pretty wrong with the present system when sixty thousand people had paid to see *The Boy David* in seven weeks, and it was still branded as a failure. But whether these figures were correct or not, it was the present system, together with endless and merciless bad luck, that *The Boy David* had had to face. And at this moment there was no more to be done or said. The cast dispersed. The scenery and dresses would be stored or sold. The name vanished from the bills outside His Majesty's Theatre, and from the agents' windows, and from the daily columns in the Press. Miss Bergner went off on a holiday abroad. Cochran was busy with his revue at the Adelphi, and planning an operetta for the Lyceum. And Barrie was back in bed, with a temperature, and the old pain, and a new pain in his chest. Practising philosophy once more about his ill-starred play, and with all the old courage, now that he knew just how little had been saved from the wreck. Astonishing in his ability to talk about it, and only to a very few with a sign of the agony of disappointment that he felt. But racked also, at this worst possible moment, by a fresh anxiety and sorrow from another quarter as well.

His brother-in-law, William Winter, a widower now for just under a year, had come up from Hampshire—of course as a guest at the flat—to consult the doctors about serious symptoms of his own. Cancer was suspected. An early operation was urged. He might have a few days in which to settle his affairs at home, and then he was to return to London and go into a nursing-home. One knows what he had represented to Barrie for nearly forty-five years.

How he had entered the story as a substitute; how at first there must always be a consciousness of the supreme honour to which he had been promoted; and how his own qualities of virtue and patience had turned him, even for his wife's brother, into a main character in the plot. Long, long memories; and now, small and old, he must face danger and suffering, which at the best would leave him an invalid for the rest of his days. Mortality closing in on all sides. A new weight on Barrie's shoulders as he lay in bed, sat in his chimney corner, or prowled wearily across the floor.

And then more cruelty; worse, because it began with a sudden burst of sunshine through the clouds. This was the Coronation year; and somehow, still early in February it reached the author's ears, and was even published in the Press, that *The Boy David* was to be revived, in connection with the celebrations, for a Royal Command Performance. His spirits shot up. Such a tribute, from the highest possible source, would raise his unjustly treated play to a position where neither critics nor syndicates could touch it. It was the one thing to make him forget his disappointment, and to restore the confidence, that had been so terribly shaken, in his own work. He was overwhelmed, and he was exalted. He was filled with gratitude, and excitement, and fresh hope.

But then, gradually, another vision faded. First it appeared that it wasn't to be a Command Performance at all, and that whoever had said so had failed to realise what the expression properly meant. And then even what was left of the plan began falling into confusion, was seen to be more and more impracticable, and at last was quietly dropped. It must almost seem now that it had only been broached in order to provide another sickening, crushing blow. And a blow which must now fall on a man fighting blindly and desperately for his life.

On February 20th, ten days after his operation, William Winter died. Once again this had been preceded by the ritualistic declaration that his condition was actually improving, and Barrie must suffer the more for having tried to believe that it was true. Now he was ill again, and aching, and miserable himself. More consultations with doctors. One high authority put everything down to neuritis, but could provide no cure for it. Another returned to the opinion that the symptoms were chiefly psychological, though he then began treating them with some electrical apparatus. There was a nurse in the flat again, but there was little enough that she

could really do, either. One wretched week following another. Moments of extraordinary sweetness and of astonishing resistance. And then it was all, once more, so far too much for him. He was just a scared, baffled, and tormented mass of nerves.

Another gleam through the darkness. You remember the summer at Balnaboth, and Princess Margaret's birthday tea-party at Glamis? Those words of hers—"It is yours *and* mine"—and what she had said afterwards—"He is my greatest friend, and I am *his* greatest friend"—had both been spoken again by Miss Bergner at every performance of *The Boy David*. Quite early in its history, at another meeting with the real author, Barrie had confessed this act of plagiarism; and just as he had once made that royalty arrangement with Jack Llewelyn Davies for the line that he had used in *Little Mary*—and as he had again talked of making it with Lord Lucas for an unconscious contribution to *A Kiss for Cinderella*—so now he had told Princess Margaret that she should have a penny for each time that each of her two phrases was spoken from the stage.

She hadn't forgotten this. And now it appeared that her father, His Majesty the King, had known of the offer and hadn't forgotten it, either. A message reached Barrie at the beginning of March—a kind and human message from one with the heaviest burden of all—that if he didn't take steps to carry out his promise, he would be hearing from His Majesty's solicitors. So this was the gleam, and rather more than a gleam. Now that Princess Margaret was a King's daughter, it might have been an impertinence to send her the money; and certainly, again, when Barrie had made the offer, he had never foreseen the subsequent embarrassment of joking about a play that had failed. So that as yet he had done nothing.

But the King's message altered and solved the whole problem at once. Now he wasn't only authorised and encouraged to pay his debt, but was determined to do so as formally and elaborately as he could. There should be no agreement on a half-sheet of note-paper this time. It should be drawn up in collaboration with his own solicitor, Sir Reginald Poole, payment should be made with a bag of bright new pennies from the bank, and there should be a ceremony and a written acknowledgment when he arrived to hand them over. All this must be done thoroughly and would take time. But again he would be playing a game with the Royal Family, and if anything could raise him out of the present depths of despondency,

it was this feeling that he was still the only writer in the world who could hope to do anything of the kind. Always, even now, he saw the beginning of his own story, and the little boy in the Tenements in the Brechin Road. He never forgot the contrast. And here was a last chance to heighten it once more.

So the preparation of the agreement would now occupy rather more than a corner of his mind. He couldn't hurry over it. For one thing it was much too important, and for another he was in no state to hurry over anything now. But presently Sir Reginald would check and approve it, and have it engrossed on parchment, and officially stamped. And then Bairie was to get the bag of new pennies. And then it was his plan to arrive at the Palace in person, where Princess Margaret was to add her own signature and complete the discharge of the loyal and peculiar debt. But not, perhaps, until the Coronation was over, and not, of course, until the document had taken on its final and most elaborate form.

Still ill, and tired, and miserably depressed. Then up and out, one evening towards the end of March, to take Katharine Asquith to dinner at the Berkeley. Down again. Another evening—Cynthia dining at the flat this time—of almost alarming hopefulness and calm. One of the moods and moments when the whole weight was lifted, and again he could exert and exercise the spell. And then new pains and more doctors. And then yet another passing break in the clouds.

Well enough, suddenly, or valiant enough to insist on dining at the Savoy. Well enough, a few nights later, to talk—though there is no more in the last of the note-books now—of writing another volume of reminiscences. Well enough, again, on April 14th, to lunch with the Dramatists' Club; a small meeting of fortunate playwrights, before whom he blossomed into an astonishing and tremendous outbreak of conversation—staggering them with this revival of a Barrie whom some of them had never known. He kept them at the table until long after the usual hour; was still well enough to dine out, and to repeat his success, that night; and on the next day to lunch with the Baldwins at 10, Downing Street, to meet and again apply his special conversational methods to Her Majesty Queen Mary.

Yet all these efforts must be paid for, and when Cynthia returned from a short visit to Paris, on April 20th, she found that he had become appreciably thinner in her absence, and was again puzzled

about himself, and worried, and tired. Sir James Irvine was staying with him—almost certainly the best companion that there could have been—but Sir James, like others, was disconcerted from moment to moment by the extraordinary ups and downs. Soon enough—anxious, fascinated, the repository of a number of uncompleted confidences of which he would now never learn the end—he, too, must leave the book-lined study for the last time.

Now Cynthia—who must set off again, for there was some fresh anxiety, also, about her mother's health at Stanway—arranged that a car and chauffeur should be hired for a month, and planned some of the outings which it was hoped would do Barrie good. But though he managed a few, the weather was all against them, and soon the chauffeur was just being told that he wouldn't be wanted to-day. No use, after all. Barrie seemed worse again. Tormented by another phase of the still unending fight.

On April 29th, after only two days of more serious illness, Lady Wemyss died. The end of more kindness, and more courage, and more suffering, than any mere words can express. Her own era had been swept aside and dashed to pieces more than twenty years ago, yet still she had always been the youngest and bravest, and when one thought of her it was never—and she would have wished this—as the invalid that she had become. Peace now for one whose place no one can ever take. No more of that inimitable flavour, of that steadfast inheritance from the golden age, in the hospitality at Stanway. No more of the warm-hearted and dauntless spirit that had glowed in the little house on the links at Kilspindie. Only memories henceforward for those whom that great source of strength and generosity had forced always to be less unselfish than itself. Barrie, who whatever he had given in return had also taken his full, immeasurable share, had lost, as he well knew, a very wonderful ally and friend.

He was too ill to go down to Stanway, with its church and churchyard nestling in a corner of the garden, for the funeral itself. But on May 5th there was a memorial service at St. Margaret's, Westminster, and this he was just able to attend. Wrapped up in his coat and scarf. Looking ghastly as he slipped quietly into the building; with no sign of recognition for any but the nearest members of the family, with whom—of course and naturally—he sat. Then Cynthia took him back again to the Adelphi. Of course and naturally, and heroically, again.

Yet when she dined with him on the next night, it seemed that he had again drawn on some further and hidden store. The pity and sadness that he felt must once more be translated into consolation and help. He would never say so. When his friends were unhappy, it was never on this that he dwelt. He just set himself, directly, to relieving the strain on their minds, almost as he had once tried to make his own weeping mother laugh. So to-night—and if this were an effort, he would allow no hint of it to escape—he forced his own spirits on to the plane of gentle entertainment, and opened that treasury of immense practical wisdom which could always be ready, for others, in an hour of need. And then he himself began to be carried away, too. Or he *was* himself, while the evening lasted; the self that all the pain and illness had kept for so long in chains. Miraculous and gallant J. M. B. He had his own reward, too, for again as he observed what was happening, he could also admire.

On the following Sunday—May 9th—he reached the age of seventy-seven. In connection with the Coronation celebrations for the forthcoming week, the British Broadcasting Corporation had been planning an increase in the scale and expense of their programmes, and one of the features was to be a couple of performances, on different wave-lengths, of *Dear Brutus*. This was the first time that Barrie had allowed any of his plays to be broadcast, for which reluctance there had been business and artistic reasons, both equally sound. But the Coronation made a difference, the Corporation was prepared to engage a first-rate cast, and in these circumstances the author had modified his own rule. He approved some suggested cuts and the introduction of a narrator's voice. He was also, of course, invited to the final rehearsals, and had enough curiosity to accept. But then came a dip in the unsteady chart; he just didn't feel well enough; and in the end the production remained entirely in other hands. Yet in fact on the evening of the first performance, which was the day after a birthday spent mostly in bed, there was a sharp rise again; and after all he took his secretary out, for the last of the birthday dinners, to the Savoy. Again he was supplied with some mysterious source of strength. There was no sign of effort. He was obviously enjoying what he had always enjoyed.

But then there must be more strain for Cynthia. A sister became dangerously and almost desperately ill down in the country. She

must go to her, stay beside her, and then, as this crisis eased, there was a call from her father in Scotland. She was away, with only one glimpse of the flat, for well over a fortnight; and Barrie, who needed her help and companionship every moment now, began sinking again into a mixture of illness and inertia. He was in bed again, with sciatica now as well as everything else. On May 26th the Dramatists' Club had to lunch without their President, but sent him a message, to which he replied, in a still longer telegram, urging them to hold their next meeting under his own roof. "This," it concluded, "would be a fine thing for me, and I should compel myself to be well again for it." But it never happened. By the date of the next meeting the flat was empty and its occupant had gone.

On May 28th—which was also the day when Stanley Baldwin retired from office, with an Earldom and the Garter, and Neville Chamberlain took his place—Cynthia returned from Scotland and found that there had been no change for the better while she was away. Yet there was a change now. The weather had suddenly improved, and Barrie, with someone to lean on again, was beginning to feel that he could at last look a short way ahead. A month ago, when Miss Bergner had telegraphed saying that she was coming over to England to see him, he had answered by putting her off. Now she had asked him to Cortina again, and this time he had decided to go. In about a fortnight, or in the middle of June, with Cynthia and Beb as fellow-travellers. He was looking forward to it. Counting on it. It was to be another holiday that he was already determined to enjoy.

On June 2nd he dined with the Asquiths at Sussex Place; a very small party, including H. G. Wells. He was in wonderful form; cheerful, gay, competitively and successfully funny. He didn't look well, but he looked better than for weeks, and could speak of some of his symptoms and distresses with an extraordinary appreciation of their comic side. Didn't want to go to bed, either. A golden evening at the beginning of the last month.

Then, for this must happen to her too, Cynthia was beset by fresh anxiety in her own family, which again kept her away from the flat. She was able to lunch there on Monday, June 7th, when Barrie was still bearing up. Still thinking of Cortina, and of a call which they were to pay together on Her Majesty the Queen, with Princess Margaret's agreement at last completed, and the bag of pennies that was ready now as well. This had been arranged for the Thursday.



On the evening of Tuesday, June 8th, Lord Horder—an old friend who only in the last few months had also become one of his physicians—found him once more so particularly depressed that he persuaded him to be his guest for dinner at the Garrick. He cheered up there, talked—still mostly about the past—for a couple of hours, and then his host took him home again and left him. There had been no sign that he was any iller than usual; but in the early morning a new condition suddenly became so acute and alarming that Thurston began summoning outside assistance at once. A doctor arrived, and was presently followed by Lord Horder, who in turn brought in a specialist. The pain, which had been agonising at first, now yielded to palliative treatment, and by the afternoon the patient was well enough or at least comfortable enough to lie reading and smoking in bed. But there were two nurses again now, and though on the Thursday he added his own signature to the agreement or indenture, it was clear that his visit to the Palace must be indefinitely shelved. On the Friday he was still going on quite as well as could be expected, but the doctors had decided now that, in order that he might be kept under special and regular observation, he should be moved to a nursing-home. It was on this day that Cynthia, whose other immediate worries and responsibilities were now slightly eased, had arranged to go down to Cornwall—for a short rest combined with Simon's mid-term exam from Westminster. There no longer seemed to be any real reason for altering this plan. So she went, and Barrie, accompanied by the two nurses, was transferred to a bedroom in Manchester Street, Marylebone.

He was pretty badly shattered by all that he had been through, but for the moment it seemed that the worst, for the time being, was over. He was only supposed to be here as a precautionary measure, and it was quite expected that in a day or so he might be going out again for little drives. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Lucas, and Peter and Nicholas Davies, and presently Bernard Freyberg, were all in the very near background for any help that they could give. But on the Sunday he was worse again, with signs now of broncho-pneumonia. In the evening Peter succeeded in telephoning to Cynthia at Bude. She hired a car at once, drove all through the night, and reached London at four o'clock on the Monday morning. There was no question now that Barrie was very ill indeed.

Not so ill that he couldn't see her and speak to her. This was also the day that Lord Horder and Sir Reginald Poole witnessed

the signature of his last will, which had been drafted some months before. He was a little better that evening; Lord Horder was able to tell the reporters, when he left about midnight, that there had been slight but steady improvement. Their Majesties the King and Queen had transmitted their inquiries and sympathy, and the Queen, with royal thoughtfulness, had arranged for the indenture to be countersigned by Princess Margaret, and sent round to the nursing-home. The bag of glittering new pennies would be delivered by Cynthia as soon as there was a moment to spare.

But there was no such moment yet, for her or for any of those who watched and waited. On the Tuesday morning the patient was still thought to be holding his own, and the evening bulletin spoke of a satisfactory day. But the statement was only comparative. The serious sign now was a vagueness and drifting in his mind. On the Wednesday, after a restless night—and with two nieces in the close background now as well—he seemed further away than ever; there was no wish nor instinct to take even necessary nourishment; and his physical condition had passed into an ominous phase of suspense. His own doctor was now in constant attendance, while Lord Horder and the specialist returned every few hours. On the Thursday he was quite definitely worse, and obviously losing ground. Much quieter now. Just lying there, on the brink of unconsciousness, with only a few, faint words for Cynthia, still always at his side. He asked her for a book once, and then mentioned *Peveril of the Peak*; but he was long past reading or being read to. In the evening there was a further consultation by the three doctors, who could only announce afterwards that his condition had become very grave. In the small hours of Friday morning there was a flicker of returning power. He spoke to Cynthia again, seemed to know well enough how ill he was and wanted to be told what the doctors thought. She could only do her best to quieten and soothe him, and presently she told him that he must try and go to sleep. He said: "I can't sleep." And these words, which he must have uttered or murmured so many thousands of times in the long, long years of wakeful nights, were the last that he spoke.

For presently he did sleep, calmly and with an extraordinary illusion of increasing strength. But though the doctors were able to detect a slight improvement in his pulse and breathing, and even announced that a little of the lost ground had been recovered, he still knew nothing of this; the strained and exhausted mechanism

was still gently running down. "Rather less critical," said the Friday evening bulletin. But it was nearly over now. Another visitor arrived, brought here all the way from her home in Biarritz by the newspaper reports; the one who for fifteen far-off years had once been his wife. She was in time to see him, but it was too late now for her presence to be known. He was sinking. The end was drawing nearer and nearer. In the early afternoon of Saturday, June 19th, his heart stopped beating and the story was finished at last.

Tributes from everywhere, headed once more by a long telegram of sympathy from Their Majesties the King and Queen. Columns in the British and American Press. Messages from all over the world. No rest for Cynthia or Peter, after their days and nights of vigil, as they coped with all that must now be faced and settled as well. The gap was hardly less tremendous than the responsibility that had come in its place. Yet it was on these two, related neither to each other nor to J. M. Barrie, that the heaviest burden fell. You who have read the story will have no need to ask why.

There was no question, however, of where the body should be laid to rest. Barrie had given his own, clear instructions that he was to be buried with his mother and father, with his sister Jane Ann, with the two other sisters who had died in infancy—eighty-five years ago—and with his little brother David, in the cemetery on the Hill of Kirriemuir. His own name was to be added at the foot of the plain, granite gravestone, "with no embellishment of any kind."

So the coffin of unvarnished oak was taken north on the Wednesday after his death; and on the Thursday, after a short service at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, it was borne along the Brechin Road, past his birthplace and the Auld Licht Manse, and then to the left up the road to the cemetery gates. The streets had been lined with townspeople, the shops and factories were closed. It was a lovely summer day, and in that lovely, translucent atmosphere the hills had never looked more beautiful as the last honours were paid. Beyond the wall there was the pavilion that Barrie had given to his town; but there was something specially sad about this now, for times had changed even since its glorious opening, and there was no Kirriemuir eleven this year.

The eight pall-bearers—relations, men of Angus, Sir James Irvine, and Sir David Wilkie—lowered the coffin by silken cords. The

Scotch earth began following it. And presently the gathering of mourners withdrew. At the same hour an open-air memorial service was held in the Old College Quadrangle of Edinburgh University, attended by about six hundred people. On Wednesday, June 30th, there was a second memorial service in St. Paul's Cathedral, with an address by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A still larger and more widely representative congregation assembled, and listened, and then also moved slowly away. Yet even now it was almost impossible to believe that the great little figure had passed from this planet, and would never be seen, in his habit as he lived, again.

There are so many answers to the unanswerable riddle, and J.M.B.—the expert at consoling others—had never for a moment imagined that he had solved it for himself. Yet though the last chapter is a chapter of almost unrelieved tragedy, and though there was so much physical suffering before the end, it may still seem to some of us that death, after a life like his, in the summer of 1937, was not without mercy and not altogether ill-timed. At least he was spared what was already rushing towards the survivors. At least he had left a land that was still at peace.

And at least, also, whatever may be the answer to the other riddle of Time, that which he had been, and had done, and had given to others, can never—even though the whole race should vanish—be either altered or lost. These things happened, whether they are to be remembered or not. They are still there, somewhere, in the mystery that surrounds us all. So that somewhere, we know—with no need for evasion or sentiment—Barrie will always be playing with his schoolfellows at Dumfries, or smoking his pipe, or writing with industrious self-approval, or discovering and meeting his heroes, or sending down his slow left-handed deliveries, or walking in Kensington Gardens, with his big St. Bernard beside him, on the watch for some little boys in red berets and blue, embroidered blouses to whom he can tell the next part of an endless tale.



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS biography was undertaken at the request of the two literary executors, Lady Cynthia Asquith and Mr. Peter Davies, and without their support and encouragement, and the use which they have permitted of copyright material, could never possibly have been planned or completed at all. They deserve not only the author's gratitude, but that of every reader of this book.

It must be quite obvious, also, that I have been given an enormous amount of help and information by a very large number of Barrie's friends, as well as by those who, in one way or another, could solve my problems or tell me what I wanted to know. It is, of course, only another tribute to Barrie himself that in all but a very few cases my questions, whether addressed to acquaintances or complete strangers, have immediately produced the promptest and most painstaking replies. Naturally I have already thanked all these kind correspondents or victims of my personal examination. But as in no instance did I detect the faintest symptom that they were also expecting to find their names in a long list at the beginning or end of this work, no such list will now appear. I am extraordinarily grateful to every one of them. But I am quite certain that this is an omission which they will entirely understand.

I must, however, mention some of the books that I have consulted, since no other acknowledgment of my indebtedness has been made. Sir John Hammerton's *Barrie, The Story of a Genius* (1929), is a monument of industrious research, which has helped me again and again. Sometimes my own researches, or information which was not available to him at the time, may have produced discrepancies between his biography and my own. But I could not have done without him; whereas he managed admirably and compendiously without me.

These are the other special books without which neither I nor anyone else could hope to cover the subject. The various editions of Mr. John Parker's almost appallingly accurate *Who's Who in the Theatre*; which have been supplemented, in my case, by still further information from Mr. Parker himself. *A Bibliography of the*

*Writings of Sir James Matthew Barrie, Bart., O.M.*, by Herbert Garland (1928). *Charles Frohman: Manager and Man*, by Isaac F. Marcossan and Daniel Frohman (1916). And *William Robertson Nicoll: Life and Letters*, by T. H. Darlow (1925).

To these volumes, as well as to the innumerable standard reference-books and biographies in the midst of which I have laboured, I am under a very great obligation indeed. I must also thank Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, Messrs. Cassell and Company, Limited, and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for their particularly courteous attention to all my inquiries. I am indebted to Miss Irene Cooper Willis for permission to print the poem which appears on page 334. And my warmest thanks are due to *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *New York Times* not only for their invaluable records, but for other assistance which they have provided as well.

Finally, if I have alluded anywhere to houses or other buildings as still standing, which in fact no longer exist, the fault—I can say truthfully—has not been my own.

D.M.

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